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MATERIALS FOR A STUDY

OF

SPENSER'S THEORY OF FINE ART

BY

IDA LANGDON, M. A.

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of
Cornell University in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR
ITHACA, NEW YORK
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ABBREVIATIONS

Amor.	Amoretti
Astro.	Astrophel
Colin.	Colin Clouts Come Home Againe
Daph.	Daphnaida
Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.	Dedicatory Sonnets preceding the Fairie Queene
Epithal.	Epithalamion
F. Q.	The Faerie Queene
1 Hymne	An Hymne in Honour of Love
2 Hymne	An Hymne in Honour of Beauty
3 Hymne	An Hymne of Heavenly Love
4 Hymne	An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie
Ireland	A View of the Present State of Ireland
Muses	The Teares of the Muses
R. of R.	Ruines of Rome
R. of T.	The Ruines of Time
S. C.	The Shepheardes Calender
V. of World's V. . .	Visions of the World's Vanitie

INTRODUCTION

Edmund Spenser left to posterity no treatise on the subject of fine art. In the *Shepheardes Calendar* his commentator, E. K., reports, in the argument prefixed to *October*, that Spenser wrote a book entitled *The English Poet*, in which he discoursed at length concerning the art of poetry. This study, containing the substance of Spenser's opinions on literary criticism, apparently was never published, and has never been discovered in manuscript. It doubtless paralleled in Spenser's literary work the *Defense of Poesie* in that of Sir Philip Sidney, and its loss is a matter of lasting regret to all students of poetry. Though Spenser's own contemporaries probably did not see *The English Poet*, they knew its value. Thus one of them, William Webbe, writes:

'Among all other his workes whatsoeuer, I would wysh to haue the sight of hys English Poet, which his freend E. K. did once promise to publishe, which whether he performed or not, I knowe not; if he did. my happe hath not beene so good as yet to see it.'[1]

And Todd says, in his account of the poet's life:

'Considering the exquisite taste, as well as the extensive learning of Spenser, the loss of his critical discourse entitled *The English Poet* is .... much to be regretted.'[2]

[1] William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetry*, in Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays* 2. 25.

[2] J. H. Todd, *Spenser's Works* (London, 1805) 1. clviii.

Though it is manifestly impossible to reconstruct *The English Poet* (there seems to be in existence but one quotation from it, and that neither certainly literal nor in any way verified)[1], it is possible to gather from the extant writings of Spenser some considerable notion of his theory of poetry. It is my aim to collect materials for a study of Spenser's theory of fine art, primarily of the fine art in which he was so eminent a master, and to present, with an introductory comment, ~~in~~ such passages from his poetry, his letters, his *View of the Present State of Ireland*, and his reported conversation in Ludowick Bryskett's cottage, as shall aid such a study. In order to do this, I have endeavored to bring together the poet's actual expressions in regard to the theory of poetry, and, so far as possible, to the fine arts in general, rather than to draw inferences from his practice, though to a limited extent I have considered this permissible. The texts used are those of the Cambridge Edition of 1908 for the poetry and for some of the letters; the Globe Edition of 1907 for the prose essay on Ireland; Haslewood's collection entitled *Ancient Critical Essays* for the letters concerning the metrical experiment; and Grosart's edition of Spenser, Volume I, for the letter in Latin verse to Harvey, for one of Harvey's letters to Spenser, and for the conversation preserved in Bryskett's *Discourse of Civil Life.*

We may at once begin with a consideration of fundamental interest, and examine Spenser's use of the word *art.* In general, the possible usages of this word show wide variations in signification. *Art*, at one extreme in its range of meaning, is nearly synonymous with beauty; it stands for truth, and for an excellent

[1] cf. Argument to *October*, and below, p. xxiv.

interpretation, or æsthetic imitation, of nature: at the other extreme, it is identified with deceit; it suggests artifice and an insincere, or merely clever, juggling with nature. Between these limits, the word is capable of divers applications. It is used to suggest skill in the exercise of some particular craft; it is connected with the notion of deftness, and with that of deceptive, though often harmless, cunning; it is employed as a vague antithesis to nature, and as a comprehensive term for all the branches of liberal learning. The word appears very frequently in Spenser. He uses the expression 'liberal arts'; he speaks of 'learned arts' and the 'arts of the schooles,' and he conjoins art, science, and philosophy. In his usage, also, art means deftness, and the exercise of trained and specialized skill. He occasionally employs the word to signify deceit, or cunning, or something supernatural and therefore alarming;—for in Spenser's day the black arts were regarded by many as very real and very evil, so that Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, and, to some extent, Jonson's *Alchemist*, were dealing with a subject that certainly perplexed, and possibly terrified, the people. In such a connection, Spenser is, for the most part, careful either to limit the word by some such adjective as 'vain,' 'deviceful,' 'magic' or 'devilish,' or to make his meaning clear by the context. At least once, he speaks of 'womanish art,' and several times by the word he designates blandishment, or studied and crafty conduct.

As a rule, when Spenser uses the word *nature*, he places it in juxtaposition with the word *art*, and means by it the out-of-door world of natural objects. The original beauty of these objects is intensified and adorned by the skill of men, under whose hands flowers and fruits are made to spring up in profusion, and

plains and islands are converted into gardens and bowers of enchantment. The reader feels sure, so detailed and painstaking are the poet's descriptions of these charming spots, that many of Spenser's models had an actual existence. Because of his accuracy and enthusiasm it is possible to speak explicitly of his interest in Elizabethan landscape-gardening. He considered it, we may imagine, one of the fine arts to be professed by those specially qualified in its technique. In the *Faerie Queene* (2. 12), where he describes the 'Bower of Bliss,' he says that its location was picked out by the 'best alyve,' who could imitate nature's work by art; in other words, it was chosen by skilled artists, trained landscape-gardeners. But that these very 'best alyve' were fallible, and prone to stray from the golden mean, we learn farther on in the same canto, where Spenser says that the spacious plain, which surrounded the 'Bower of Bliss,' was 'too lavishly' bedecked by art. This stanza (2. 12. 50) has been singled out for comment by George Mason in *An Essay on Design in Gardening*, where, in the course of a passage concerning shrubberies, he says:

'Shrubberies and beds of flowers demand limitation: immoderately extended they mark the triumph of luxury over elegance. .... This extension of mere garden-scenery was disapproved of long ago by our allegoric poet; as is evident from his description of the enclosure he has entitled the Bower of Bliss.'

This distaste for a superabundance of appeal, summed up in the expression 'too lavishly,' reminds us of the protest that Lord Bacon, soon after Spenser, was to make in his *Essays* against gardens which were 'too busy or full of work.' Images cut out in juniper were for children, and 'as for the making of knots or figures, you may,' he declares, 'see as good sights

many times in tarts.' But Spenser perhaps was interested in trying to do something more than suggest restraint and freedom from the mere 'garden stuff' that Bacon was to censure: he seems to have felt that art dealing with nature in gardens often produced effects of over-sweetness and over-smoothness, and lost the opportunities for contrast. At all events, Leigh Hunt believed that the poet anticipated the more modern taste in landscape-gardening, commonly said to have originated with Milton—the taste which demanded something in the way of rugged antithesis, which yearned toward 'stronger forms of the picturesque,' and advocated 'a departure from the smoothness of beauty in order to enhance it.' In support of this belief, Hunt cites the *Faerie Queene* (2. 12. 59):

> One would have thought (*so cunningly the rude*
> *And scorned partes were mingled with the fine*),
> That Nature had for wantonness ensude
> Art, and that Art at Nature did repine;
> So striving each th' other to undermine,
> Each did the others worke more beautify.

The lines clearly suggest a fondness for that diversity in uniformity, and that contrast, which are vital elements in all artistic technique and endeavor. Moreover, Spenser recognizes this truth in other connections: 'Discord ofte in musick makes the sweeter lay,' he writes, (*F. Q.* 3. 2. 15); and his friend, E. K., in the introduction to the *Shepheardes Calender*, expresses the same general notion in speaking of Spenser's use of archaisms. The passage is sufficiently in point to quote:

'But all as in most exquisite pictures they used to blaze and portraict not onely the daintie lineaments of beautye, but also rounde about it to shadow the rude thickets and craggy clifts, that, by the basenesse

of such parts, more excellency may accrew to the principall (for ofttimes we fynde our selfes, I knowe not how, singularly delighted with the shewe of such naturall rudenesse, and take great pleasure in that disorderly order) even so doe those rough and harsh termes enlumine and make more clearly to appeare the brightnesse of brave and glorious words. So oftentimes a dischorde in musick maketh a comely concordaunce: so great delight tooke the worthy poet Alceus to behold a blemish in the joynt of a wel shaped body.'

These passages in regard to art and nature have another and greater value than that they merely inform us of Spenser's interest in landscape-gardening as a fine art; they help us to know what Aristotle's phrase, 'Art imitates nature', meant to this Elizabethan. The Greek philosopher and the English poet, though they might not always have defined 'nature' in the same manner, were alike in their theory of the procedure of the artist. Neither thought that the aim of æsthetic imitation was exact reproduction, and neither confused an ability to copy with the genius to interpret. The artist's task was, through some chosen medium, to reveal nature exalted and beautified, and to demonstrate its universal and eternal truth, rather than its local and occasional facts. Everywhere in Spenser are ideas that appeal to students of Aristotle's *Poetics* as entirely familiar. What nature omits, art supplies; art is that 'which all faire workes doth most aggrace,' (*F. Q.* 2. 12. 58); contending with nature, art aspires 't' excell the naturall with made delights,' (*Muiopotmos.* 166). Art, in short, divines nature's unfullfilled intentions, and reveals her ideal to sense. Imitation thus becomes a creative act, and the artist, seizing upon the true ideas which lie behind the concrete objects of nature, and striving to complete nature's

purposes, becomes her interpreter, and at the same time her rival.[1]

The larger conception of nature, though less striking in Spenser than that which has previously been discussed, is not absent from his works; and it is important to realize, if one wishes to grasp the full significance of his theory of imitation, that nature as the creative power, the operative force in the universe, is a familiar idea to him (*F. Q.* 2. 12. 23; 7. 7. 4; 7. 7. 13: *Muses* 502; *Amor.* 21). Her sergeant is Order; she sits 'unseene of any, yet of all beheld'; she is an artificer cunning in her operations; and Mutability, who strives to control all things, is her daughter and her humble servant.

Other passages than those which treat of the relationship between art and the world of natural phenomena show Spenser's conception of the imitative process. He does not overlook its more restricted meaning; on the contrary, he takes pleasure in its precise function of exact reproduction. Consult, for example, *Muiopotmos*, where Minerva and Arachne produce in their weaving or needlework figures that seem real in their lifelikeness. Moreover, the simile of the mirror was a favorite with Spenser, and is another indication of his notion of æsthetic imitation. This image, to which the age showed itself partial, finds its most familiar expression in Hamlet's address to the players, when he tells them that the end of their art 'is to hold as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure' (*Hamlet* 3. 2). In like manner, Spen-

[1] Cf. S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, pp. 154 ff.

ser reflects his Sovereign's face, her realms, and her 'great auncestry,' in the 'fayre mirrhour' of his Epic (*F. Q.* 2, *Prologue* 4), and bids her behold herself in 'mirrours more than one,' as he reveals her power and majesty through Gloriana, and her 'rare chastitee' through Belphœbe (*F. Q.* 3, *Prologue* 5). In *An Hymne in Honour of Love* (190 ff.) we come upon the figure again, but find its meaning deepened and enriched; the mirror of the mind reproduces the object of imitation, 'fashioned unto a fairer forme.' And here it may be pointed out that the Aristotelian concept of imitation often appears in connection with Spenser's treatment of 'form.' In *An Hymne in Honour of Beauty* (211–217), there is a helpful passage in regard to the idealizing treatment of nature's matter of fact by the artist, or specifically, in this case, by the illuminated mind of the lover of beauty. Indeed. this question of imitation will best resolve itself, if it is closely connected with Spenser's understanding and interpretation of the word 'form.' A discussion of this subject is not immediately appropriate, but it may be said that to Spenser æsthetic imitation is an attempt to reproduce the essential form of objects, their essential truth as distinguished from their outward manifestation, which is nothing more than their expression through a medium always inadequate.

In his poetry, Spenser shows a definite interest in architecture; his pictures of fountains, bridges, gateways, temples, and castles are detailed and reasonable. They are the pictures of the fountains, bridges, gateways, temples, and castles of fairyland, to be sure, but they are upborne on very solid and stately pillars 'after the Doricke guise,' or graven with 'corbes' and pendants, or approached by steps

of alabaster; and the fountain hard by the Bower of Bliss (*F. Q.* 2. 12. 63), whose

> margent round about was sett
> With shady laurell trees, thence to defend
> The sunny beames,

is no mere creation of an uncurbed fancy. Spenser had seen some such example of the Elizabethan builder's workmanship. And he was anxious to accord praise and recognition to the 'wondrous powre' of the makers of all these admirable objects. Dexterous craftmanship of any kind made an unfailing appeal to him. He commended the workers in precious metals, in ivory, and in jewels: their skill it was which gave its real value to the already rare, and in that sense precious, material (*F. Q.* 4. 4. 11). Thrones and chariots and ornaments were the creation of 'cunning,' 'skillful,' 'guileful,' or 'deviceful,' hands. The references to exquisite objects made by goldsmiths and kindred artificers are so numerous as to suggest that decorative things had a special attraction for this poet, and that he may have delighted to surround himself with specimens of the bric-à-brac and ornaments of his day.

In passing, let us notice that the word 'skill' also is of frequent occurrence in Spenser's vocabulary. Often it stands for deftness; more often it expresses some degree of knowledge, varying from mere cognizance, through understanding and judgment, to the larger interpretation of knowledge as the power to know and to do.

Though Spenser's references to sculpture are few—he speaks of 'the surpassing skill of Phidias,' and that is about all—he shows a decided interest in painting, and in the pictorial values of the arts of

needlework and tapestry. Leigh Hunt writes at some length of Spenser as the poet of the painters:

'I think that if he had not been a great poet, he would have been a great painter, and in that case there is ground for believing that England would have possessed, and in the person of one man, her Claude, her Annibal Caracci, her Correggio, her Rembrandt, perhaps even her Raphael. I suspect that if Spenser's history were better known, we should find that he was a passionate student of pictures, a haunter of the collections of his friends Essex and Leicester.'[1]

However idle it may be to speculate upon what a man would have been had he not been what he was, it is rewarding to observe Spenser's intense interest in the graphic arts. Poetry and painting, because both are representative or imitative, have indeed a 'family relationship,' and very often concern themselves in the same undertakings, fastening their eyes on the same subjects in a common effort to imitate and express. And yet, when a poet does suggest to us his sympathetic nearness to a painter, it is worth while to take note of the resemblance, for it helps to mark his type, just as the sympathetic nearness of a poet to a philosopher helps to mark his type. One of the more obvious signs of Spenser's kinship with the painters, Stevenson to the contrary notwithstanding, is shown by his frequent use of adjectives denoting color: his maidens are dressed in scarlet mantles or garments blue; they have golden nets on their golden hair, golden 'ribbands' at their slender waists, and green garlands on their heads; one damsel wears a gown of 'home-made greene that her owne hands had dyde,' and youths cover their Lincoln green jackets with silver lace; the steward

[1] Leigh Hunt, *Imagination and Fancy*.

of the House of Temperance is a brilliant figure 'yclad in red', and managing in his hand a white rod; the ocean is gray; the sunrise purple, and the sunset ruddy; apples are 'rosy redd and vermillion'; and the islands are 'dispred with grassy greene of delectable hew.' All these colors were a joy to Spenser. Let us quote once more from Hunt:

'In corroboration of the delight which Spenser took in this more visible kind of poetry, it is observable that he is never more free from his superfluousness than when painting a picture.'

In several cases, Spenser speaks explicitly of paintings. Alma's sages (*F. Q.* 2. 9. 50) lived in chambers 'dispainted all within with sondry colours' portraying many objects; some, such as never were in the world, being fancies of the painter's brain; and some, like Fra Lippo Lippi's pictures of familiar matters— 'daily seene and knowen by their names,' says Spenser— 'things we have passed perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see,' says Browning. In fact, according to Spenser, the painter properly deals with a vast diversity of material:

> All artes, all science, all philosophy,
> And all that in the world was ay thought wittily
> (*F. Q.* 2. 9. 53).

The portrayal of perfect beauty is indeed, 'for all his maistring skill,' beyond the painter's achievement; the poet far surpasses him, and on the whole, he who would see himself rightly pictured had best look to the power of 'sweete verse.' But Spenser feels the impotence of all art, poet's or painter's or whosesoever. It must perpetually fall short of adequate expression, and when the object to be represented is of a certain spiritual magnitude, must resign its task to 'the greater craftsman's hand .... that can express the life of things

indeed' (*Amor.* 17), and to the hand of him who fashions in accordance with a heavenly pattern. This notion of the perfect craftsman may be compared with the passage in Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* ending: 'In brife all things are artificial, for Nature is the Art of God.' In its origin, the notion is, of course, Platonic.

There are indications in Spenser's poetry that he was well acquainted with Italian painting, and there are minute descriptions that demonstrate his familiarity with the remarkable tapestries of his time. In fact, it may be said that his fondness for the needle and the loom, when their work took pictorial shape, was very great. In *Muiopotmos* he speaks of the 'curious skill of workes with loome, with needle and with quill,' of Arachne, 'the fine-fingred workwoman,' and of her 'praise-worthie workmanship.' In the *Fairie Queene* 3. 1. 34, we find:

> The wals were round about appareiled
> With costly clothes of Arras and of Toure,
> In which with cunning hand was pourtrahed
> The love of Venus and her paramoure,
> The fayre Adonis turned to a flowre,
> A work of rare device and wondrous wit.

Britomart, indeed, wearies in fingering 'the fine needle and nyce thread,' but this is Spenser's nearest approach to Sidney's little jest: 'Truly a needle cannot do much harm, and as truly—with leave of ladies be it spoken—it cannot do much good.'

Spenser shows no specific love for music as such. For the most part he speaks of it as synonymous with poetry, or accords it interest as poetry's fitting accompaniment. Not only is this natural enough in the case of a poet whose very thoughts seem 'to move harmonious numbers,' and who was a master

of the art of rhythm and metre, but in part at least, it is explicable on other grounds. Spenser is giving us a very fair notion of the music most characteristic of his day, — not the dignified music of the Church, where he must have heard the sweet and moving masses of Palestrina, the masses, motetts, hymns, and anthems of Tye, Tallis, Byrde, and Farrant, but the lyrical music that filled Elizabethan England to overflowing with popular melody and song. Chappel, in his *Old English Popular Music*, makes the statement that in the latter half of the sixteenth century, music was the predominant art, and that 'no subject, during the period, perhaps not even excepting religion, so occupied men's minds.' Bonavia Hunt, in his *History of Music*, says: 'The latter part of the sixteenth century was the golden age of the madrigal, particularly in England, under the reign of Elizabeth, who fostered music no less than the other liberal arts.' Bass-viols, we read, hung in every drawing-room for visitors to play; not only all households, but, oddly enough, all barber-shops, were supplied with lutes, virginals, and citherns,—and 'if idle, barbers pass their time in life-delighting musique.' Solo and part-singing and the 'merry' roundelay were general throughout England. The 'polyphonic' madrigals were elaborate arrangements, 'in which,' writes Mr. Child, (*Cambridge History of English Literature* 4. 129), 'four, five, or six voices sang, at the same time, independent melodies, which had no necessary likeness in pitch or in rhythm. Different words were often sung simultaneously, or the same words to different rhythms. so that if each singer was made to accent his words with the greatest care, the impression on the hearer was general.' These are the very kinds of music of which Spenser speaks, music from which it is not natural to dissociate

words, and which he, because his interest was primarily in the medium of words, regarded as having no important separate existence.[1] When he is conscious at all of music as apart from poetry, or from pastorals and 'songs of love and jollity,' he reveals that it is to him an agreeable sort of thing, eminently fitted to mark joyous occasions, and suggestive of dancing and mirth. Sometimes he speaks of it as comforting and refreshing to those that hear; sometimes as luring them on, robbing them of their senses and confounding them with its sweetness. He appears to have almost no conception of it as a separate means for deep and passionate expression, but it must in fairness be said that contemporary musicians had little of that conception themselves. 'All music sleeps, where death doth lead the dance,' Spenser writes. In his lament for 'the noble and virtuous Douglas Howard,' he does suggest that he is just conscious of a type of music that is serious and solemn, but none the less,

[1] Compare Milton's Latin poem, *Ad Patrem*, in which the youthful writer, after rehearsing the noble traditions and inherent value of beautiful verse, reveals an attitude in regard to the preëminence of poetry over melody very like that which we have discovered in Spenser. The effect of extreme partiality, however, in Milton's lines is immediately tempered by all that we know of his love for pure music. And the comparison which we here suggest is chiefly of value as it urges us to caution in our ultimate conclusion in regard to Spenser's musical appreciation. The lines from Milton run as follows in Cowper's translation:

> And what avails, at last, tune without voice,
> Devoid of matter? Such may suit perhaps
> The rural dance, but such was ne'er the song
> Of Orpheus, whom the streams stood still to hear,
> And the oaks follow'd. Not by chords alone
> Well touch'd, but by resistless accents more
> To sympathetic tears the ghosts themselves
> He moved: these praises to his verse he owes.

he banishes the three fatal sisters and their sweet harmonies, 'For even their heavie song would breede delight'—apparently not the delight which it is the function of all art, even tragedy, to breed, but delight essentially linked with joyousness and gaiety of heart. The roaring organ, in the *Epithalamion*, in conformity with this conception, is exhorted to play, not in such a manner that it may increase the dignity of the ceremony, but loudly and in lively notes, that it may add to the merry-making.

The technique of music, in all probability, was not unknown to Spenser (we have seen that he recognized the value of discord); but he often arranges such curious combinations of instruments and sounds, that although there is the chance that in so doing he is reproducing actual phenomena of Elizabethan musical practice, one is tempted to believe that this poet of painters was, apart from the immortal harmony of his own verse, no poet of musicians. Human voices are often compared with birds' voices; ladies sing like larks, but louder; human voices and birds' voices join together in what seems an impossible chorus; we get pipes, tabors, tymbrels, 'crouds,' and singing maidens in unison, and, finally, in the following stanzas, a *Kindersymphonie* which Spenser himself felt to be something extraordinary (*F. Q.* 2. 12. 70–71):

> Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,
> Of all that mote delight a daintie eare,
> Such as attonce might not on living ground,
> Save in this paradise, be heard elswhere:
> Right hard it was for wight which did it heare
> To reade what manner musicke that mote bee:
> For all that pleasing is to living eare
> Was there consorted in one harmonee;
> Birdes, voices, instruments, windes, waters, all agree.

> The joyous birdes, shrouded in chearefull shade,
> Their notes unto the voice attempted sweet:
> Th' angelicall soft trembling voyces made
> To th' instruments divine respondence meet:
> The silver sounding instruments did meet
> With the base murmure of the waters fall:
> The waters fall with difference discreet,
> Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call:
> The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

Compare with these stanzas Wordsworth's lines (*Prelude* 3. 430 ff.) in which he too describes the audible harmonies of an imagined 'Bower of Bliss,' an ideal sanctuary for his country's youth:

> A primeval grove,
> Where, though the shades with cheerfulness were filled,
> Nor indigent of songs warbled from crowds
> In under-coverts, yet the countenance
> Of the whole place should bear a stamp of awe;
> A habitation sober and demure
> For ruminating creatures: a domain
> For quiet things to wander in.

Spenser, to be sure, was not arranging a spot in which 'quiet things' should wander and ruminate; however, he was painting a garden with all that could delight the senses, and we may pretty safely imagine that Wordsworth would have found it 'a too gaudy region', and have admitted his sensitive ears to be mightily 'vexed' by what mightily 'pleased' those of the Elizabethan.

It ought perhaps to be said that Spenser wrote the lines quoted above under the influence of Tasso, so that the whole passage practically amounts to a translation. Hallam, however, in bringing a reproach against Spenser, feels justified in citing these very stanzas.[1] He says:

[1] Henry Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe* 2. 332.

'Spenser seems to have been sometimes deficient in one attribute of a great poet, the continual reference to the truth of nature, so that his fictions should be always such as might exist on the given conditions. This arises, in a great measure, from copying his predecessors too much in description, not suffering his own good sense to correct their deviations from truth. . . . In the last canto of the second book, we have a celebrated stanza, and certainly a very beautiful one, if this defect did not attach to it, where winds, waves, birds, voices, and musical instruments are supposed to conspire in one harmony. A good writer[1] has observed upon this, that, "to a person listening to a concert of voices and instruments, the interruption of singing birds, winds, and waterfalls, would be little better than the torment of Hogarth's enraged musician."'

So much, then, for Spenser's attitude toward the fine arts in general. It would seem that he was delicately strung; open to many impressions; full, like the Greeks, of eager interest, and gifted with the capacity of enjoyment; deeply and immediately responsive to all beauty, and reverent toward its apostles and prophets; warm in his admiration of the skilled workman in whatsoever craft. In short, he was a poet whose concern was with beauty and truth in all their manifestations; who, looking upon the world in a spirit of love, enthusiasm, and understanding, found his materials in nature, in science, and in the fine arts other than his own. The latter Spenser regarded in two ways: they were expressions of that cosmic beauty which it was his joyous task to express through the greatest of them, and they were themselves part of the cosmic beauty, part, therefore, of the very material

[1] Twining: *Translation of the Poetics*, p. 14. (Hallam's note.)

with which poetry dealt. As an example of this attitude, let us glance at the sonnet which Spenser prefixed to Lewkenor's translation of Contareno's *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*. The buildings of Venice are fair to behold, yet not so fair 'As Lewkenor's stile, that hath her beautie told'; that is, the work of the architect furnishes subjects for the work of the poet, and yields to it the supremacy in beauty.

We now come to Spenser's own theory of poetry, and first, as fundamental, to a brief discussion of his theory of its function. The greater poets show an impressive unanimity of opinion in regard to the purpose of their art. They express its purpose with characteristic differences in wording, phrase, and stress, but one does not find them at variance in their essential and ultimate assumption of what poetry is to do. Some say it is to please, and some who are more careful, or less confident of being immediately understood, say that the end of poetry is to teach and to please, or that it is to give pleasant instruction, or that it is one of a number of other things which in reality mean the same. Aristotle emphasizes the emotional delight, the pure and elevated pleasure,[1] which it is the object of poetry to produce: but a study, even superficial, of Aristotle, shows one that this pleasing exaltation is inextricably combined with a moral and instructive effect. The two cannot be separated, and because it was Aristotle's habit to use words in the full value of their meaning, which value is, broadly speaking, always inclusive and affirmative, he merely said that the end of the fine arts was to give pleasure. Horace did not really add any new idea when he declared that to please and to teach constituted the ends of

[1] Cf. Butcher's commentary on the *Poetics*, p. 221.

poetry, but he perhaps made the matter clearer to the majority.

For Spenser, too, the mission of poetry had this familiar double aspect, which was the sign, nevertheless, of a completely unified function. In the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, which precedes the *Faerie Queene*, the purpose of the poem is explicitly given; 'The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline.' The author further explains that, in selecting the literary type in which to carry out this design, he was influenced by his conception of what would be 'most plausible and pleasing' to his readers. The emphasis is, perhaps, on the side of instruction, but the pleasure-giving element is not forgotten. Englishmen are to be taught their great opportunity and their great duty, to be equipped to run a good race, to be shown a possible artistic ordering of their lives. Spenser is aware that some prefer their sermons, as it were, 'straight out.' 'To some, I knowe, this methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in the way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then thus clowdily enwrapped in allegoricall devises.' But that he has faith in the pleasure-giving power of his great poem, is shown when in one of the dedicatory sonnets he writes to the Lord High Chancellor of England:

> Those prudent heads, that with theire counsels wise
> Whylom the pillours of th' earth did sustaine,
> And taught ambitious Rome to tyrannise,
> And in the neck of all the world to rayne,
> Oft from those grave affaires were wont abstaine,
> With the sweet Lady Muses for to play:
> So Ennius, the elder Africane,
> So Maro oft did Caesars cares allay.

> So you, great Lord, that with your counsell sway
> The burdeine of this kingdom mightily,
> With like delightes sometimes may eke delay
> The rugged brow of carefull Policy;
> And to these ydle rymes lend litle space,
> Which for their titles sake may find more grace.

At the close of the sixth book of the *Faerie Queene*, he bids his poem, in so many words, seek to please. In *October* (21 ff.), the twofold end is mentioned:

> O what an honor is it, to restraine
> The lust of lawlesse youth with good advice,
> Or pricke them forth with pleasaunce of thy vaine
> Whereto thou list their trayned willes entice.

The moral purpose occupies the writer's mind in *Prosopopoia* (l. 810), where he says that the only pride of sweet poets is 'virtue to advance and vice deride.' In *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, a little before the middle of the essay, we find a most illuminating dialogue concerning the power of the poet, and the function of his work. The passage requires no comment, and is given in full in the collection of material.[1]

Along with all the varied interests that pertain directly to private life, there is in Spenser's poetry a sound public spirit. In a sense, of course, it animates the whole, but it becomes obvious in several places. Prince Arthur, ravished with a diligent perusal of 'an ancient boke, hight Briton moniments,' which he discovers in the House of Temperance, cries out (*F. Q.* 2. 10. 69):

> Deare countrey! O how dearely deare
> Ought thy remembrance and perpetual band
> Be to thy foster childe, that from thy hand
> Did commun breath and nouriture receave!

[1] Cf. below, p. 45.

> How brutish is it not to understand
> How much to her we owe, that all us gave,
> That gave unto us all, whatever good we have!

And Britomart is moved with love of Troy and pity for its fate, when she hears that she is lineally descended from the Trojan race (*F. Q.* 3.9.40):

> For nothing may impresse so deare constraint
> As countries cause and commune foes disdayne.

We concern ourselves with the sentiment, not with the genealogy.

On the whole, then, it is probable that had Spenser expressed for us his notion of the function of poetry, he would have used the Elizabethan equivalent to some such phrase as *the giving of delightful instruction.*

Spenser must have read in Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesy* the description of the Poet, who, 'lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature, as the heroes, demi-gods, cyclops, chimeras, furies, and such like; so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry,' the passage continues, 'as divers poets have done; neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too-much-loved earth more lovely; her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.'[1] The whole quotation is reminiscent of Scaliger, who said the poet is another god and creates,[2] and the last few lines

[1] Sidney, *Defense of Poesie*, ed. Cook, p. 7.

[2] Scaliger, *Poetics*, tr. Padelford, *Yale Studies in English* 26. 8.

especially suggest Spenser's practice. In the *Prologue* to the second book of the *Faerie Queene*, Spenser himself makes some such claim for the poet. His world is infinitely greater than the ordinary man supposes, though the world of the ordinary man daily increases in size and diversity. There were times when 'th' Indian Peru,' 'the Amazon's huge river' and 'fruitfullest Virginia' were all unknown. In the same way, the great world of the poet's fancy is invisible to all save the poet, but he will hold his mirror up and show the 'lond of Faery' to him who hath eyes to see; he will be another god and create. Thus much at least we discover about Spenser's idea of the character of the poet—he is 'of imagination all compact,' though, as we shall later find, we have no right to assume that Spenser would have employed the word 'imagination' in just this way. We are able also to gather up a few hints of Spenser's conception of the poet's personal characteristics. If it is allowable to generalize from his description of his admired friend and brother-artist, Gabriel Harvey, the poet 'sits like a looker-on of this worldes stage'; he scorns to fawn for the favor of the powerful, he is 'a great lord of peerelesse liberty' who exalts the good and noble, and condemns evil with a 'critique pen.' From *The Teares of the Muses* we learn that the poets are of humble mind and high insight, they feed on the sweet contentment of their own thought and contemplate eternal and heavenly values. And Spenser is sure that the court is no place for them (Colin 687 ff.):

> For, sooth to say, it is no sort of life
> For shepheard fit to lead in that same place,
> Where each one seeks with malice and with strife,
> To thrust downe other into foule disgrace,

Himselfe to raise; and he doth soonest rise
That best can handle his deceitfull wit
In subtil shifts, and finest sleights devise,
Either by slaundering his well deemed name,
Through leasings lewd and fained forgerie,
Or else by breeding him some blot of blame,
By creeping close into his secrecie;
To which him needs a guileful hollow hart,
Masked with faire dissembling curtesie,
A filed toung furnisht with tearmes of art,
No art of schoole, but courtiers schoolery.
For arts of schoole have there small countenance,
Counted but toyes to busie ydle braines,
And there professours find small maintenance,
But to be instruments of others gaines.
Ne is there place for any gentle wit,
Unlesse to please, itselfe it can applie:
But shouldred is, or out of doore quite shit
As base, or blunt, unmeet for melodie.

In *October*, indeed, Piers suggests that the suitable environment for 'pierlesse poesye' is the palace of a prince, but not at a time when standards are low and taste is debauched. Material success is not the goal of Spenser's poet, for whom 'the praise is better than the price, the glory eke much greater than the gayne.'

Indirectly, Spenser implies that happiness is one of the qualities befitting the poet's nature, as Shelley was afterwards to call it a requisite. In the beginning of *Astrophel*, the lament for Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser speaks of him as far surpassing all the pastors, that is, all the teachers or poets of his day,

In one thing only fayling of the best,
That he was not so happy as the rest.

Was not the single lack a flaw in the personality of one whom Spenser otherwise rated as a poet indeed? In addition to these, there are very few actual references

to the character of the poet that can be found in Spenser, for E. K.'s assertion in the argument to *October*, that 'in Cuddie is set out the perfecte patterne of the poete' is scarcely made good. But such references as there are, taken in combination with Spenser's teaching about the function of poetry, make us see that he realized the dignity, sweetness, wisdom, and power that must go to form the great poet.

Now that we have some notion of the character of the ideal poet, we must try to discover how he works, and the amount of data that we collect in this attempt will exactly determine our comprehension of Spenser's theory of poetical technique. In so far as we can find what are the principal laws of their science in accordance with which Spenser believes the poets to write, or to go a step further back, in so far as we can make sure whether to Spenser poetry was a science at all, we shall be on the way to a good understanding of his artistic creed. The result of our investigation can be only partially satisfying. In the argument prefixed to *October*, E. K. says that Spenser in his lost work, called *The English Poete*, discoursed at length of poetry as a divine gift, a heavenly instinct, poured into the poet by celestial inspiration, adorned by learning and labour, yet not to be acquired through them—in short, a God-given thing and 'no arte.' Lowell thinks it probable that E. K.'s words are an extract from the lost work, and asserts that they show how high a conception Spenser had of poetry and of the poet's office.[1] And William Webbe, in a discussion concerning the divine origin of poetry, written shortly after Spenser's death, points out that Ovid acknowledged a divine origin for verse and says:

[1] Cf. Lowell, *Among my Books*, Second Series, *Spenser*, p. 160.

'Wherevnto I doubt not equally to adioyne the authoritye of our late famous English Poet, who wrote the Sheepheards Calender, where lamenting the decay of Poetry at these dayes, saith most sweetly to the same:

> Then make thee winges of thine aspyring wytt,
> And whence thou camest flye backe to heauen apace.'[1]

It is true that Spenser often asks for inspiration, fit inspiration too, now from the 'greater Muse' who shall bring him out from the woods and forests to sing in bigger notes of the gods; now from the Muse who inspires with martial rage, but who is bidden to come to him with her haughty string let down and to raise her second tenor as more in keeping with his theme. In the prologue to the sixth book of the *Faerie Queene*, he tells us that none can find the way to learning's treasures except those whom the Muse teaches and infuses with goodly fury. The 'celestial rage of love' also inspires the poet: he is filled by it with 'furious insolence', until he feels himself in the enviable case of one 'yrapt in spright'; or, if his love is unkind and scorns him, he falls into uninspired silence. And Cuddie, the above-mentioned 'perfecte patterne,' commends the stimulus of wine in lavish cups:

> For Bacchus fruite is friend to Phoebus wise.

But this glorification of the born and inspired poet need not dismay us; we shall find that, to some extent, he is also made and educated. Horace, Vida, Boileau, and other students of the art of poetry have begun by enunciating the necessity for the endowment of original genius, which no man in his senses entirely denies, and have then, in detail, continued to discuss

[1] William Webbe, in Haslewood's *Critical Essays*, 2. 25.

the mechanics of poetry, the laws and devices of its production. It is natural enough in the course of an epic or lyric poem to speak of inspiration, whereas it would be most unnatural to speak of technique, whose very presence can only be proven by keeping it hidden, and every mention of it suppressed. We need not therefore be surprised if the poems give us little light on the laws in accordance with which they undoubtedly were written. But the 'Sweete Ladie Muses, ladies of delight,' 'daughters of Dame Memorie and Jove the father of Eternitie,' are not Spenser's only guides. He has a wise respect for training and discipline, and he very plainly advises the young poet to begin simply with easy themes (among these he includes love songs), and then to advance to tragic plaints, to tales 'Of bloody Mars, of wars, of giusts,' of brave knights and royal princes. When this mood is over, let him relax his 'haughtie string' and sing again of love and lustihead, or even lead the country dances. Spenser followed this advice himself, beginning with the *Shepheardes Calender* and its pastoral love songs, and going forward to the now martial, now courtly strains of the *Faerie Queene*. More than that, in the *Hymne of Heavenly Beauty* he tells us that it had been his way to begin humbly with an easy view of things as they present themselves in this world, and to advance only as he trained himself by thought and discipline to deal with greater subjects. That this assertion is an evidence of the Platonic inspiration of the hymns is not for us the immediate interest. Regardless of its source, the sentiment is to be counted as contributing toward an understanding of the present question, the thought of this poet concerning poetical method, and concerning the method of fine art in general.

Spenser desired criticism for himself and impressed its value upon others. At one time, he wrote asking Harvey to send him back some portions of the *Faerie Queene*, which he had given over to this friend for comment; he bids him send the 'long expected judgement wythal, whyche let not be shorte, but in all points such as you ordinarilye use and I extraordinarily desire.' And Thenot, in *November*, advocates submission to a learned critic;

> Nay, better learne of them that learned bee,
> And han be watered at the Muses well:
> The kindlye dewe drops from the higher tree,
> And wets the little plants that lowly dwell.

The clearest expression of Spenser's attitude toward a conscious art of poetical writing, an expression which goes far to prove that E. K. was somewhat over-positive in his assertion that poetry was to Spenser 'no arte,' is found in *December*. There Colin says that he had in his youth some bent, some original talent, for 'song and musick's mirth,' and that one Wrenock, a good old shepherd (doubtless some schoolmaster who taught Spenser to write his first Latin verses in the school of the Merchant Taylors), made him 'by arte more cunning in the same.' This one stanza is of more value as an indication of Spenser's belief in the benefit of training than is E. K.'s comment on the *English Poete*; it puts Spenser with the great masters who taught that, in order to produce the good poet, original genius must be coupled with long study and exercise in the practice of his art.

From Spenser's own utterances we know that he concerned himself with questions of poetical 'ornament'; with restraint or the observance of the *via media*; with the appropriateness of style to subject, with the agreement of circumstance and matter with

truth; and with unity and sequence, qualities which he is conscious of having sometimes failed to heed in the *Faerie Queene.*

Since the time of Richter only have critics of poetry given much consideration to the distinction between imagination and fancy; the terms, as applied to the art, are therefore of a comparatively late growth, and we must not hope to find them specifically mentioned in Spenser. Whether the imaginative faculty was in his mind when he spoke of poetical ornaments, we cannot determine. It is more likely that by them he meant, as we should mean, figures of speech or schemes of rhyme and meter; but it is clear that when he spoke of 'sweete witt,' of good or rare invention, of well-savoured poems or of the 'deviceful matter' of song, he meant something akin to the workings of 'imagination.' His rare uses of the actual word do little more than show that he did not employ it to express a quality of poetical writing. He calls Stanihurst's conjecture about the descent of the Irish 'a very gross imagination', and, also in the essay on Ireland, he speaks of 'dreams and vayne imaginations.' From one of Harvey's letters we infer that Spenser had written of his delights at the time as proceeding from 'some strange melancholy conceits and speculative imaginations discoursed at large in his brain and fancy'. But these examples go to prove that the imaginative faculty as Shakespeare or as Wordsworth, for example, thought of it, did not, unless under some other name, enter Spenser's mind.

From the essay on Ireland we discover how Spenser went about the writing of prose, and while perhaps such information scarcely reveals his methods of preparation for poetical writing, it is safe to assume that he did not take less pains for his chosen

type of literature than for this type which was of secondary importance to him. It was only after careful preliminary work and planning, and the addition to his own reading of all that he was able to learn from the Irish bards and chroniclers, that he ventured to set down anything. 'Out of them both togither, with comparison of times, likewise of manners and customes, affinitye of woordes and names, propertyes of natures and uses, resemblances of rytes and ceremonyes, monumentes of churches and tombes and many other like circumstaunces,' he gathered what he called 'a likilihood of trueth.' If all this labour preceded the production of the Irish treatise, is it probable that the Ladie Muses or any other providers of celestial fury were allowed to stand as sole sponsors for the *Faerie Queene*? It may be said that the prose was in the class of an exact report upon political conditions important in Spenser's day and to his Sovereign, and that hence he was scrupulous to prepare himself. But it may be answered that the *Faerie Queene* was the man's life-work, a work for which he prophesied immortality, and for whose perfection no labor of his brain or his hand could have seemed too detailed or too onerous. In addition to this reasoning from his evident practice on one occasion to his probable method on all occasions, there is one more proof to be adduced. In one of Spenser's letters to Gabriel Harvey, he speaks of his lost, or subsequently recast, poem, *Epithalamion Thamesis*, and convinces us of the care that he took to inform himself concerning a subject before he wrote about it. In this particular case, he had undertaken to describe all 'the rivers throughout Englande .... and their righte names and right passage.' It was, he said, a work of much labor, but a work in which he found assistance,

because Master Holinshed had made a study of these streams and had 'bestowed singular paines in searching oute their firste heades and sources, and also in tracing and dogging oute all their course, til they fall into the sea.' 'Poetry,' said Wordsworth, 'Is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science'; and as Wordsworth turned for his material to literature, to books of travel and natural science, to the best that contemporary knowledge offered him, so from this instance of the rivers we may be sure that Spenser turned with the poet's characteristic curiosity and appreciation to whatsoever sources of information he found available.

Before we leave the general subject of the poet's method, let us revert to the Irish essay long enough to glance at the writers either consulted by Spenser in its preparation, or referred to by him in its course. In order to discuss the Irish mantle, Spenser has collected information from such various sources as the Bible, Diodorus Siculus, Herodotus, 'the Greeke Commentaryes upon Calimachus,' and Virgil. Concerning their arms and battle-array, he has read Olaus Magnus, Buchanan's *De rebus Scoticis*, Solinus 'and others,' and Herodianus 'and others.' He refers from memory to a passage in Plutarch's *Treatise of Homer*, and to Lucian's 'Sweete dialogue which is intituled Toxaris or of frendship.' He has made a thorough study of Irish customs and superstitious rites, and here again had consulted Buchanan. He speaks of Camden's explanation of an old Scythian legend, and at the close of his argument, meant to prove the Scythian descent of the Irish, he writes: 'Many such customes I could recount unto you, as of theyr old manner of marrying, of burying, of dauncing, of singing, of

feasting, of cursing.' It reminds one again of Scaliger's poet, who is the creator of a second nature, and more particularly of Scaliger's paragon, Virgil, who, we are told, talks of the building and managing of ships, of wars and cities and laws, and is conversant with all the arts and all the sciences. Indeed, the poet is primarily the man of understanding in its scientific, historic, philosophic, almost in its divine, sense. But to continue, Spenser has also read the ancient records of Bede; he has made an etymological investigation of British words in use among the Irish; and he has taken note of all that Strabo had written concerning the adoption by the Spaniards of the letters brought them by the Phœnicians, and of all that 'many auncient and authentycal writers' had said of the subsequent carrying of those letters by Spanish Gauls into Ireland. Before the essay is done, this Elizabethan poet has mentioned specifically something like twenty-five sources of information, besides histories and chronicles whose authorship is not told; he has more than once asserted that his discussion is not full, and that much remains to be said; he has indirectly given a warning against unquestioning acceptance of the statements of the Irish bards; and he has administered a rebuke to Stanihurst, who, though a man of learning and of Irish birth, has been lightly 'carryed away with old wives tales from approovaunce of his own reason,' and who, failing to search into the truth, is led to ground gross imaginations upon gross conjectures. Spenser's careful investigation of Irish ways and traditions convinces him of their value as literary data, and their right to conscientious treatment.

'Indeede, Eudoxus,' he writes, 'you say very true: for alle the customes of the Irish, which I have often

noted and compared with that I have reade, would minister occasion of most ample discourse of the first originall of them, and the antiquityes of that people, which in trueth I doe thinke to be more auncient then most that I knowe in this end of the world; soe as yf it were in the handling of some man of sound judgement and plentifull reading it would be most pleasaunt and proffitable.'[1]

And Eudoxus is in agreement, for he declares with enthusiasm:

'This ripping up of auncient historyes, is very pleasing unto me, and indeede savoureth of good conceite, and some reading withall.'[2]

All this painstaking preparation resulted, to be sure, in a prose tract, but it is the same sort of painstaking preparation that goes to equip the poet, and is as likely to furnish material for an epic or a drama as for a political or economic treatise.

It is not so easy to trace Spenser's studies and examination of sources, and his conscious and acknowledged debts to literature in his poems; however, we can gather up a few references of interest. He writes to Sir Walter Raleigh that he followed 'all the antique poets historicall' in the compilation of the *Faerie Queene*—they turn out to be Homer and Virgil: to them he adds Ariosto, and Tasso—'by ensample of whiche excellente poets,' who fashioned virtuous men, he labors to portray his hero, 'perfected in the twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised.' Many times, now directly by name, now under the title *Tityrus*, he makes grateful and admiring references to Chaucer that 'well of English undefyled,' in the footing of whose feet he strives to follow. Langland too, whom he mentions in the epilogue to the *Shepheardes Cal-*

[1] *Ireland*, p. 624. [2] *Ibid*, p. 629.

ender, must have been much in his thought. Finally, we know from the allusions in his minor work to contemporary poets that he regarded their verse with interest, and, quite simply and modestly, thought of himself as one of them, though later ages have so unhesitatingly set him higher.

Though this study cannot consider Spenser's unacknowledged sources, some of the most obvious of them may be set down. Aristotle, as indicated above, suggests the very framework of the *Faerie Queene*, throughout which, and in the *Shepheardes Calender*, we trace Virgil, Theocritus, Bion, and Lucretius, possibly Homer; Plato inspires the Hymns, while the Visions reveal a copious debt to Petrarch and Tasso, and to the French Sonneteers. The members of the *Areopagus* were conversant, we may be sure, with the doings of their elder brothers in the *Pléiade;* Italian and French influences were strong upon Spenser. So incomplete an enumeration of sources is of little value *per se*: it is here included only with the hope that it may militate against the all too common tendency to underestimate the part that books play in the inspiration and equipment of great poets. The ill-informed, the thoughtless, and those whose enthusiasm springs from the admiration of things not necessarily or intrinsically admirable delight too much to say of certain poets: 'They owed nothing to books, they drew their material at first hand from nature, or from the play of their own imagination.' Upon this they cite Burns and Wordsworth, and confidently shove over the burden of proof. But because Wordsworth had the good fortune to write much in the open air, and because Burns composed and perfected his verse as he strode behind the plow, and because Spenser was possessed of an opulent fancy, and wandered brooding and

dreaming in 'the lond of faerie', let no one suppose that these men had not studious habits. and eagerly and earnestly made acquaintance with literature.

The dominant note in Spenser's theory of art, the note that sounded in all that he wrote, was Platonic. The conceptions of 'form' and of the 'idea,' taught in the great dialogues, laid firm hold of his mind, and made him. sixteenth century Puritan though he was in his religious creed, essentially Greek in his æsthetic belief. Through Ficino and Bruno, Neo-Platonic doctrines were popular in Italy, and Castiglione's *Courtier* had helped to make them familiar to Englishmen. Numerous elements characteristic of the Italian, French, and English poetry of his day Spenser passed by with indifference or scorn; the great and illuminating teaching of Platonism he seized upon with the unerring grasp of a mind that knew its worth. Miss Lilian Winstanley, in her valuable edition of *The Foure Hymnes,* writes:

'When Spenser proceeded to Cambridge in 1569, the religious enthusiasm in the University was almost wholly Puritan in tone, and certainly all that was intellectual in the University was Platonic. . . . Spenser, keenly intellectual and deeply religious, felt fully the influence of both movements; the combined influence of Puritanism and Platonism is evident from his earliest work to his latest. . . . Spenser's Puritanism saved him from seizing upon those pagan and sensuous elements in classical literature which proved a pitfall to so many of his contemporaries; it made him blind to the more dangerous aspects of Platonism, and helped to concentrate his attention on that which is noblest and most characteristic in Plato — his ethical genius; on the other hand, Spenser's Platonism preserved him from the, artistically at any rate, no less

dangerous pitfalls of Puritanism; it helped to preserve him from mental narrowness by showing him the best possible examples of freedom and flexibility of mind, and taught him what, as a poet, it was most essential he should know — that beauty is not only consistent with moral earnestness, but may be made to contribute to it in the most powerful way. There is, as Mr. Pater has remarked, "a certain asceticism amid all the varied opulence of sense, of speech and fancy natural to Plato's genius"; it is precisely in this union of opulence and of sense and fancy with an inward asceticism, that the resemblance to Spenser is most close.'

Apparently the greatest poets have all accepted the Platonic theory of 'form', and the Aristotelian theory of imitation which emanates from it. Spenser not only acquired the notion at first hand, and from the Italians, but he found it also in his great model Chaucer, who had, in his turn, derived some of his understanding of it from 'the wise poete of Florence, that highte Dant.'

A collection of Spenser's uses of the word 'form', and of its compounds and derivatives, throws much light on what he meant it to denote, and shows that while he occasionally employed it in the sense of 'type', 'kind', or 'outer appearance', in the greater number of cases he gave it the signification of a Platonic word (cf. p. xxxvii). He has, moreover, furnished us with a famous couplet, that is, in itself, an adequate explanation of what the word means, when judiciously and properly used. (2 *Hymne* 132):

> For of the soule the bodie *forme* doth take:
> For soule is *forme*, and doth the bodie make.

Perhaps a few more quotations containing the word in its Platonic sense will clear the way for a short discussion.

> Of all God's workes, which doe this world adorne
> There is no one more faire and excellent,
> Than is man's body both for powre and *forme*
> Whiles it is kept in sober government.
>
> (*F. Q.* 2. 9. 1.)

> The glorious image of the Makers beautie,
> My soverayne saynt, the idoll of my thought,
> Dare not henceforth, above the bounds of dewtie,
> T'accuse of pride, or rashly blame for ought.
> For being, as she is, divinely wrought,
> And of the brood of angels hevenly borne,
> And with the crew of blessed saynts upbrought,
> Each of which did her with theyr guifts adorne,
> The bud of joy, the blossome of the morne,
> The beame of light, whom mortal eyes admyre,
> What reason is it then but she should scorne
> Base things, that to her love too bold aspire?
> Such heavenly *formes* ought rather worshipt be,
> Than dare be lov'd by men of meane degree.
>
> (*Amor.* 61.)

> Such is the powre of that sweet passion [love]
> That it all sordid basenesse doth expell,
> And the refyned mynd doth newly fashion
> Unto a fairer *forme* which now doth dwell
> In his high thought. . . .[1]
>
> (1 *Hymne* 190 ff.)

[1] It may be as well to say that the *Hymnes* though strikingly Platonic in quality, do not always convince us that the Platonic inspiration was immediate. Much as is accounted for by the *Symposium* and *Phædrus*, no thorough study of these Spenserian poems can afford to neglect the consideration of the fourth book of Castiglione's *Courtier*. It is probable also that the Italian Platonists, Marsilio Ficino and Giordano Bruno, had a strong influence upon the *Hymnes*. Cf. Lilian Winstanley, *The Foure Hymnes*, pp. lviii ff.

But they which love indeede looke otherwise,
With pure regard and spotlesse true intent,
Drawing out of the object of their eyes
A more refyned *forme*, which they present
Unto their mind, voide of all blemishment;
Which it reducing to her first perfection
Beholdeth free from fleshes frayle infection.

(2 *Hymne* 211 ff.)

Most ugly shapes and horrible aspects
Such as Dame Nature selfe mote feare to see,
Or shame that ever should so fowle defects
From her most cunning hand escaped bee;
All dreadfull pourtraicts of *deformitee*.

(*F. Q.* 2. 12. 23 ff.)

In *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, Irenæus advocates the creation of a new officer, a 'Provost Marshall', whose duty it shall be to bring in stragglers. Eudoxus, who objects because provision already is made, says: 'Methinks it is an unnecessary charge, and also unfitt to continue the name or *forme* of any marshall law when as there is a proper officer already.'

For the sake of completeness, it is worth while in connection with these passages to examine some others in which the poet employs, not 'forme', but 'idea', or 'pattern,' to express the perfect archetype which lies behind every manifestation of nature in this world of defective and temporal values. This concept, which is in reality the same as that of 'form,' is essentially Platonic. The Greek word ἰδέα corresponds to the Latin 'forma,' and the translated equivalents, 'idea' and 'form', as well as the terms 'pattern' and 'mould', were in constant use among the English Platonists and Neo-platonists.

Leave, Lady, in your glasse of christall clene
Your goodly selfe for evermore to vew,
And in my selfe, my inward selfe I meane,
Most lively lyke behold your semblant trew.

Within my hart, though hardly it can shew
Thing so divine to vew of earthly eye,
The fayre *idea* of your celestial hew
And every part remaines immortally:
And were it not that through your cruelty
With sorrow dimmed and deformed it were,
The goodly ymage of your visnomy
Clearer than christall would therein appere.
(*Amor.* 45.)

What time this worlds great workmaister did cast
To make al things such as we now behold,
It seemes that he before his eyes had plast
A goodly *paterne,* to whose perfect *mould*
He fashioned them as comely as he could,
That now so faire and seemely they appeare
As nought may be amended any wheare.

That wondrous *paterne*, wheresoere it bee,
Whether in earth laid up in secret store,
Or else in heaven, that no man may it see
With sinfull eyes, for feare it to deflore,
Is perfect Beauty which all men adore;
Whose face and feature do so much excell
All mortall sense, that none the same may tell.
(2 *Hymne* 29.)

These two sets of examples contain specific references to 'form', 'pattern', or 'idea', but their significance may be reinforced and clarified by many passages implying the same notions, in which, however, the words themselves do not appear. One of the most obvious instances of this concept of the relation between essential form and outward appearance occurs in Spenser's reference to Chaucer's line in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, 'he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis.' Our poet writes (*F. Q.* 6. 3. 1–2):

True is, that whilome that good poet sayd,
The gentle mind by gentle deeds is knowne:
For a man by nothing is so well bewrayed
As by his manners, in which plaine is showne

Of what degree and what race he is growne.
For seldome seene, a trotting stalion get
An ambling colt, that is his proper owne:
So seldome seene, that one in basenesse set
Doth noble courage shew, with courteous manners met.

But ever more contrary hath bene tryde,
That gentle bloud will gentle manners breed.

In the second and fourth Hymns are these very similar lines (2 *Hymne* 139 and 4 *Hymne* 133):

For all that faire is, is by nature good;
That is a signe to know the gentle blood,

and

For all thats good is beautifull and faire.

In *Daphnaida* (211 ff.) we read:

In purenesse and in all celestiall grace,
That men admire in goodlie womankinde,
She did excell, and seem'd of angels race,
Living on earth like angell new divinde,
Adorn'd with wisedome and with chastitie,
And all the dowries of a noble mind,
Which did her beautie much more beautifie.

But Spenser, for all his sincere acceptance of these Platonic and Aristotelian concepts of form, saw all about him their apparent contradictions. He did not avoid the difficulties; he strove to explain them away. The failure in correspondence between inner spirit and outer manifestation was either to be laid at the door of Chance as an unnatural thing, or it was to be attributed to the inevitable inadequacy of the medium through which the soul or form was striving to reveal itself. And in this admission Spenser makes clear the eternal struggle of nature and of art toward perfection. Media are not wholly plastic; they do not absolutely yield themselves to the touch of the craftsman, be he human or divine. and this stubbornness

of the substance results in imperfect expression, imperfect accord between inner essence and outer appearance, so that the latter is 'deformed with some foule imperfection.'[1]

Spenser shows a third way of accounting for the want of correspondence, but it is hardly a matter which concerns the artist: deliberate abuse may destroy and lay waste the invisible beauty, while the visible still remains; this, though it violates, does not contradict the law.

The effect of these beliefs upon their holder's theory of fine art could, of course, be in part discovered and estimated, but the present study can concern itself with them only as the poet himself made reference to them in his poetry. Spenser, in his professed striving to suit manner to matter, and in his occasional regretful admission of failure, reveals how constantly he kept before him the notion of 'form.' For instance, he writes (*June* 77):

> I wote my rymes bene rough, and rudely drest:
> The fytter they my carefull case to frame.

And again (*Muses.* 541 ff.):

> A dolefull case desires a dolefull song,
> Without vaine art or curious complements,
> And squallid fortune, into basenes flong,
> Doth scorne the pride of wonted ornaments.

[1] Dante expresses the thought in the first canto of the *Paradiso*:

> True is it that as oft accord is none
> Between the form and purpose of an art,
> Through the brute matter that we work upon
> So from this course too often doth depart
> The creature ....

Plumptre, in his note on the passage, says: 'The thought is almost a commonplace of the schools. Art requires (1) the mind of an artist; (2) an idea conceived by him as an end; (3) material to work on. Defects in either lead to incompleteness.'

Then fittest are these ragged rimes for mee,
To tell my sorrowes that exceeding bee.'

Compare with this Sidney's lines in the *Arcadia* (X):

A shepheard's tale no height of stile desires,
To raise in words what in effect is lowe:
A plaining song plaine-singing voice requires,
For warbling notes from inward chearing flowe.

Spenser despises 'heapes of huge words uphoorded hideously,' that have back of them little sense, and are, none the less, applauded by bad judges, and made the chief praise of poetry; in the essay on Ireland, he speaks of words as the 'Image of the mynd,' proceeding from the mind and affecting it. Where his theme rises in dignity, he asks (*F. Q.* 2. 10. 1)

Who now shall give unto me words and sound,
Equall unto this haughty enterprise?
Or who shall lend me wings, with which from ground
My lowly verse may loftily arise,
And lift it selfe unto the highest skyes?
More ample spirit, then hetherto was wount,
Here needes me.

Sometimes the words and sound and ample spirit fail him. *An Hymne to Heavenly Beauty* begins:

Rapt with the rage of mine own ravisht thought,
Through contemplation of those goodly sights,
And glorious images in heaven wrought,
Whose wondrous beauty, breathing sweet delights,
Do kindle love in high conceited sprights,
I faine to tell the things that I behold,
But feele my wits to faile and tongue to fold.

'Great happines,' 'sovereign glory and great bountyhed,' the exceeding beauty of Belphœbe, the goodness and gracious favour of Queen Elizabeth, the glorious light of Una's 'sunshyny' face, the praises of Britomart — these things, he asserts, half in earnest, his rude pen cannot describe. Occasionally, even material ob-

jects are too splendid in richness and detail for his simple song; and once, where a description of Dame Nature is desirable, he writes, with more relief than shame, that Dan Geffrey himself relegated this all too difficult task to one Alane, who wrote a *Plaint of Kinde*, and there apparently accomplished a satisfactory delineation once and for all. In the fourth Hymn there is an especially interesting passage of this kind, where Spenser is discoursing upon the endless perfectness of heavenly beauty, and writes (4 *Hymne* 104 ff.):

> How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse
> The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?
>
> Cease then, my tongue, and lend unto my mynd
> Leave to bethinke how great that Beautie is.

He is asking here for two things: the language of the sublime as understood by Longinus; and time clearly to think out and imagine his conception before he strives to express it. Readers of the *Paradiso* will recall Dante's frequent assertions of his inability to describe the beauty of Beatrice, an inability which increases as her beauty increases, and culminates near the end of the *Divine Comedy* (*Paradiso* 30. 16—33), where the poet feels that he, like every craftsman, has reached the boundaries appointed to his art. Neither Spenser nor Dante, however, was writing ineffectively in these passages. What in weaker hands might have been negative admissions, both converted into positive assertions; yet the method employed is closely related to the ordinary device whereby writers and speakers announce to us long lists of the things that they profess to pass over in silence.

The last few paragraphs go to prove the extent to which our poet appropriated and used the Greek con-

cepts of form and substance. His belief in the relation between matter and manner, form and body, shows him a serious and original thinker. For it is precisely this attempt to reproduce, through some chosen medium, the idea, the form, the ultimate truth and perfect beauty that lie behind natural processes and natural phenomena, that makes possible a true originality. Such originality is no strained or grotesque effort for newness of effect, or that showy and trivial thing called novelty, but, reverting for its material to the original truths that lie behind the perverted facts, it partakes of a formative power, and is, in its nature, creative. In short, the measure of an artist's success is dependent upon his clearness of perception and comprehension, and his command of a medium. In proportion as he falls short of this clearness or of this command, he falls short of perfection in what he produces: he, more than any other, must be able to follow the gleam, and catch the vision without which the people perish.

Spenser's friend, Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Defense of Poesie,* gives, as do most of the writers upon poetical technique, some little space to a comparison of the respective materials and methods proper to poetry and to history. In determining the question of superiority, he turns straight to Aristotle, whom he quotes as asserting that poetry is more philosophical, more studiously serious, and more universal, than history. Sidney sums up the argument as follows:

'So, then, the best of the historian is subject to the poet; for whatsoever action or faction, whatsoever counsel, policy, or war stratagem the historian is bound to recite, that may the poet, if he list, with his imitation make his own, beautifying it both for further teaching and more delighting, as it pleaseth him:

having all, from Dante's Heaven to his Hell, under the authority of his pen.'[1]

Something of all this seems to have been in Spenser's mind; he could scarcely have remained unconscious of the old dispute between poets and historians, and though we can find very scanty reference in his work to the topic, we can, even so, make sure that he placed his fellow-craftsmen in the higher position. In the letter at the beginning of the *Faerie Queene*, Spenser says that the method of the 'poet historical' (by which it would seem that he meant the poet of the epic or narrative type) is not the method of the historiographer. The latter relates occurrences in chronological order and as they happened; the former thrusts 'into the middest, even where it most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the thinges forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing analysis of all.'[2] The poet, in other words, is not bound by the facts: he seizes upon what is salient: he draws from the

[1] Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*, ed. Cook, p. 20.

[2] See also Horace, *Art of Poetry*, tr. Howes, in *The Art of Poetry*, ed. Cook, p. 11:

> Nor does he run his subject out of breathe
> In dry detail from Meleager's death
> To Diomed's return; nor yet begins
> The Trojan war from Leda and her twins;
> But posting onwards, brooking no delay,
> To the mid-theme he boldly bursts his way;

Vida's *Art of Poetry*, tr. Pitt, in *The Art of Poetry*, ed. Cook, p. 81:

> The poet marks the occasion, as he sings,
> To launch out boldly from the midst of things,
> Where some distinguished incident he views,
> Some shining action that deserves a Muse;

and *Paradise Lost*, Bk. 1, Argument: 'Which action past over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things.'

past, and the past teaches him how to foresee the future; both together reveal to him the truth, which, because he is at once historian, philosopher, and poet, illumines for him the facts of life. and gives them their only value. His process, therefore. is to select; his duty is to universalize. Nor in this assertion of the idealizing and universalizing office of poetry do we forget that art imitates; 'for what it imitates is the universal element in things, their παράδειγμα, their idea and essence. Hence, too, it is guided by right insight (λόγος ἀληθής). and leaves out what is a deformity and therefore accidental.' [1]

In *Prosopopoia* there is an interesting list of the matters upon which it is possible to confer with the 'Lady Muses,' that is, a list of the subjects proper to poetry. A little more than two hundred years later, Wordsworth began the *Advertisement* to *Lyrical Ballads*: 'It is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind.' Yet the sphere of poetry had not widened since Spenser's day, nor in his, since Homer's, except in so far as each succeeding generation had added its contribution to the subjects 'which can interest the human mind.' The list of Spenser just referred to contains the following materials for poetry: 'nature's works,' 'heaven's continual course,' 'foreign lands,' 'people different,' 'kingdom's change,' 'divers governments,' and 'dreadful battles of renowned knights.' From two other passages we are able to add the deeds of warriors and faithful loves. Spenser gave to the 'Lady Muses' a wide and glorious domain.

In *The Teares of the Muses*, our poet shows the depth of his feeling in regard to ignorance. To un-

[1] Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, I. 175.

derstand the fervor of his contempt, we must again call to mind how full of Greek doctrines Spenser was, and must realize that for him, as for the Hellenic seer, wisdom and virtue were one; and ignorance and vice, or, if not vice, at least confusion in all the realm of being, went hand in hand. 'Base minded they that want intelligence,' sings Clio (*Muses* 88), and Urania asks (487 ff.):

> What difference twixt man and beast is left,
> When th' heavenlie light of knowledge is put out,
> And th' ornaments of wisedome are bereft?

Melpomene says (127 ff.):

> Most miserable creature under sky
> Man without understanding doth appeare;
> For all this worlds affliction he thereby,
> And Fortune's freakes, is wisely taught to beare:
> Of wretched life the onely joy shee is,
> And th' only comfort in calamities.'

Knowledge and reason, on the other hand, are all-powerful to teach and preserve mankind. Solon in giving his laws to the Athenians, 'laboured by all meanes to temper theyr warlick couradge with swete delight of learning and sciences' (*Ireland*, p. 613); and Spenser proposes a like service for Ireland, that wretched realm, which, he says, especially needs the liberal arts to *reforme* her state. With this, compare *Faerie Queene* 2. 10. 25, where in the chronicle of Britain's kings, Bladud is commended as one who brought the arts from Athens, and with sweet science mollified the stubborn hearts of the warlike islanders. Orpheus, stilling the strife of the 'noble peres of Greece' with the sound of his harp is merely another symbol of this civilizing influence of the arts.

But it is, of course, of the power of poetry for the advancement of goodness that we learn most.

'Verses are not vain,' said Spenser, unwilling to admit their vanity even in a moment of humbleness. Poetry kindles men's minds with a desire for the good things of which it tells, with an ambition to do noble deeds, and with an admiration of beauty. When it is laudatory it dignifies the poet as well as the object of his praise; it is the chief and proper glorifying of virtuous deeds. Britomart's aged nurse, when she would incite the damsel to take up arms, recalls to her the many tales of warlike maidens sung in her father's hall (*F. Q.* 3. 3. 54.):

> And sooth, it ought your corage much inflame,
> To heare so often, in that royall hous,
> From whence to none inferior ye came,
> Bards tell of many wemen valorous.

The very authority that poetry exerts makes it an edged tool, and the poet must not carelessly tamper with a weapon whose power for good is ever balanced by its power for evil. Spenser, for example, regrets the influence of his hymns in honor of earthly love and earthly beauty, and, to counteract their regrettable effect, writes two others on heavenly love and heavenly beauty. In the essay on Irish (p. 641), he states, with feeling, the possibilities that lie open to the poet of harming or helping:

'It is most true that such Poetts, as in theyr writings doe laboure to better the manners of men, and through the sweete bayte of theyr numbers, to steale into yonge spiritts a desire of honour and vertue, are worthy to be had in great respect. But these Irish Bards are for the most part of another mynd, and soe farr from instructing yong men in morall discipline, that they themselves doe more desarve to be sharply disciplined; for they seldome use to choose unto themselves the doinges of good men for the

ornamentes of theyre poems, but whomsoever they find to be most licentious of life, most bold and lawless in his doinges, most daungerous and desperate in all partes of disobedience and rebellious disposition, him they sett up and glorifye in theyr rimes, him they prayse to the people, and to yong men make an example to followe.'

To Spenser, as poetry excelled painting in one way, so in another, its great attribute of permanence, it excelled even the builder's art, the shrines, pillars, pyramids, mausoleums, 'huge colosses,' and other objects of 'goodly workmanship.' The immortality of verse, an immortality not merely redounding to the poets, but conferred by them upon the objects of their song, was an ancient classical conceit, common in Pindar, Horace, and Ovid, revived by the Italians of the Renaissance, caught up by the French, and from them taken over by the English so generally that we find it everywhere in Elizabethan poetry. Nashe tells us: 'Men of great calling take it of merit to have their names eternized by poets'; and Sidney, in his *Defense of Poesie*, exhorts his readers to believe the poets when they say that they will make people immortal by their verses. Spenser makes the claim a score of times (*R. of T.* 365 ff.):

> Provide therefore (ye princes) whilst ye live,
> That of the Muses ye may friended bee,
> Which unto men eternitie do give.

To the Lord High Admiral of England, he writes a sonnet (6. *Ded. Sonnet*, *F. Q.*) terminating:

> Thy praises everlasting monument
> Is in this verse engraven semblably,
> That it may live to all posterity.

Examples might be given in profusion. The very frequency of their occurrence has the effect of robbing

them of any element of vainglory; they rather appear as the conventional expression of Spenser's belief, entirely simple and straightforward, and hence entirely sincere, in the permanent life and value of beautiful verse.

But though, along with most other Elizabethan poets, Spenser made this claim of immortality for his work, he nevertheless lamented a lukewarmness in his contemporaries' appreciation of poetry, and with it a decline in the actual merit of the poetry of his day. *The Teares of the Muses* is one long complaint over this deplorable condition. It is extravagant, almost irritating in tone, and in order to have patience with it, one must take care not to be misled by the date of its publication, which by no means immediately followed its composition. It was printed in 1591, and by that year the brilliant literary age of Elizabeth had begun. Presumably, however, it was written, in 1580, and while one must admit that, even at the time, there was an occasional generous patron, and an occasional deserving artist, Spenser's account of a sort of poetical famine in the land was in large measure warranted. The age had produced no epics; Clio was silent; she had nothing noble of which to sing. Calliope's heroes were corrupted through 'unnoble sloth.' There were a few second-rate allegories such as Hames' *Pastime of Pleasure*, and Sackville's *Mirror for Magistrates*. Lyrical composition suffered from the rudeness of the age, and the laxity of morals; Barclay's *Eclogues* and Skelton's *Satires* were degraded in tone, though the case for Euterpe was somewhat redeemed by the best poetry of Wyatt, Surrey, and Harington, by Gascoigne's shorter pieces, and by Sir Philip Sidney's sonnets. Shakespeare was not yet known in 1580;

the tragedy of the day was full of horror and lacking in dramatic skill, while the writers of comedy were content to entertain the vulgar with 'vaine toyes.'

Though Spenser mentions tragedy in several different places, we derive from them, on the whole, nothing of value. We merely learn that tragedy deals with 'wretched persons to misfortune borne,' who 'fill the scene with plaint and outcries shrill'; that the changeful councils of the fickle world daily make new matter for tragedy; and that comely behavior and costly garments befit the tragic stage. One may detect a faint foreshadowing of 'all the world 's a stage' in that doleful stanza in *The Teares of the Muses* (157) commencing:

> For all mans life me seemes a Tragedy,

and ending:

> And he at last laid forth on balefull beare.

A little further on in the same poem (165) appear two lines unfortunately ambiguous in meaning; they are from Melpomene:

> But I, that in true tragedies am skild,
> The flowre of wit, finde naught to busie me.

Albeit unwillingly, we must for ever remain in doubt whether 'the flowre of wit' is a dainty epithet appropriated by an over-complacent Muse, or is a phrase in which Spenser claims for tragedy the chief place among literary types. The latter hypothesis is, of course, improbable, for Spenser gave little sign of any preference for the drama. To be sure, he wrote nine comedies (and lost them) and, to be sure, Gabriel Harvey thought them superior to the *Faerie Queene*, but Gabriel Harvey, as a critic, is not to be taken too seriously.

Nevertheless, we must admit that Spenser in Thalia's song (*Muses* 175), gives us an admirable description of what he considered good comedy, commencing:

> Where be the sweete delights of learnings treasure,
> That wont with comick sock to beautifie
> The painted theaters, and fill with pleasure
> The listners eyes, and eares with melodie;
> In which I late was wont to raine as queene,
> And maske in mirth with graces well beseene?

He continues to lament that vain toys and folly, which entertain the vulgar, have supplanted the fine 'counterfesaunce,' the harmless sport, the seemly and delightful laughter which formerly characterized the comic stage. Comedy, he says, presents man 'in his likest image.' The writers of comedy were framed by nature 'to mock herselfe, and truth to imitate, with kindly counter under mimic shade.' Finally, the innocent merriment, which is comedy's rightful quality, has given place to scorn and contempt and scurrility. Spenser was himself capable of fine scorn, but he had an essentially gentle nature, and in the case of comedy he apparently demanded a certain 'regard or due decorum' along with a certain wholesome kindliness, just as, in the case of satire (*Colin* 748), he preferred a condemnation general rather than particular in its application.

The last mournful Muse is Polyhymnia, and through her mouth (547 ff.) Spenser complains of a deterioration in metrical beauty:

> For the sweet numbers and melodious measures
> With which I wont the winged word to tie,
> And make a tuneful diaspase of pleasures,
> Now being let to runne at libertie
> By those which have no skill to rule them right,
> Have now quite lost their naturall delight.

Here, perhaps, Spenser's lament is most extravagant, for the age offered many poems in elaborate metres. More than that, this seems the place to mention that Spenser's own metrical record is not without the reproach of at least one period of mistaken zeal: I mean his participation, along with Sidney and Dyer, in Gabriel Harvey's design to reform English prosody by a substitution of classical metres for the native and accustomed measures and rhymes. The undertaking interested our poet: he corresponded at some length with Harvey concerning it, and sent him specimen verses in the new manner. The following sample might characterize the whole fore-doomed attempt:

Iambicum Trimetrum

Unhappie Verse! the witnesse of my unhappie state.[1]
Make thy selfe fluttring wings of thy fast flying
Thought, and fly forth unto my love wheresoever she be:

Whether lying reastlesse in heavy bedde, or else
Sitting so cheerelesse at the cheerfull boorde, or else
Playing alone carelesse on her heavenlie virginals.

Harvey speaks of this proposed metrical change as 'our new famous enterprise for the Exchanging of Barbarous and Balductum Rymes with Artificial Verses: the one being in manner of pure and fine Goulde, the other but counterfet, and base ylfavoured Copper.' And there were others in England who approved of the attempt. Puttenham heads the twelfth chapter in the second book of the *Arte of English Poesie* thus cautiously:

'How iff all maner of sodaine innouations were not very scandalous, specially in the lawes of any language

[1] 'As indeed it was in a sense not meant,' says Professor John W. Hales, in his Introduction to the Globe Edition of Spenser.

or arte, the use of the Greeke and Latine feete might be brought into our vulgar poesie, and with good grace inough.'[1]

William Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetrie*, is more enthusiastic:

'Sorry I am,' he writes, 'that I can not find none other with whom I might couple him [Spenser] in this catalogue, in his rare gyft of Poetry: although one there is, though nowe long since seriously occupied in grauer studies (Master Gabriell Haruey) yet, as he was once his most special freende and fellow Poet, so because he hath taken such paynes, not onely in his Latin Poetry . . . . but also to reforme our English verse, and to beautify the same with braue deuices, of which I thinke the cheefe lye hidde in hatefull obscurity: therefore wyll I aduenture to sette them together, as two of the rarest witts, and learnedest masters of Poetrie in England. Whose worthy and notable skyl in this faculty, I would wysh, if their high dignities and serious businesses would permit, they would styll graunt to bee a furtherance to that reformed kinde of Poetry which Master Haruey did once beginne to ratify: and surely in mine opinion, if hee had chosen some grauer matter and handled but with halfe that skyll, which I knowe he could haue doone, and not powred it foorth at a venture, as a thinge betweene iest and earnest, it had taken greater effect than it did.'[2]

But Nash in his *Foure Letters Confuted* stated a sincere disapproval of the whole matter:

'The hexameter verse, I graunt to be a gentleman of an auncient house (so is many an English beggar),

[1] George Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, Haslewood's *Critical Essays* 1. 85.

[2] William Webbe, Haslewood's *Critical Essays* 2. 36.

yet this clyme of ours hee cannot thrive in; our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; hee goes twitching and hopping in our language like a man running upon quagmiers up the hill in one syllable and down the dale in another; retaining no part of that stately smooth gate, which he vaunts himselfe with amongst the Greeks and Latins.'

On the whole 'the reforme,' so soon entirely relinquished by Spenser, needs not be reckoned with in an account of his theory of poetry. Its value lies merely in the proof that it adds to many less tangible indications, that Spenser made an exact study of the mechanics of his art. In this instance he set for himself a task that certainly provided strict metrical training. His control of metre, harmony, and rhythm, which perhaps for many people is his principal claim to artistic excellence, is shown, if only in the light of the serious attention which he accorded Harvey's scheme, to be explicable under other laws than those of naïve inspiration; and one more element is thereby added to that portion of the poet's equipment for which he consciously labored.

In spite of Spenser's discouragement at the state of poetry in the England of his day, he spoke, with rare exceptions, only generously of individual poets, praising even those who envied him (*Colin* 392):

> There eke is Palin, worthie of great praise,
> Albe he envie at my rustick quill.

Again in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (76 ff.), he says, of Raleigh:

> He pip'd, I sung, and when he sung, I piped,
> By chaunge of turnes, each making other mery,
> Neither envying other nor envied.

In fact, his state of mind has so perceptibly changed since the time of writing *The Teares of the Muses*,

that in *Colin Clout* (376) he affirms that there are no better poets alive than Elizabeth's. And if this praise even when put to its most liberal interpretation preserves something negative and cautious in its quality, it nevertheless indicates that Spenser had come to a happier opinion in regard to the condition of his art.

Though he laments the inappreciative days upon which he and his brothers have fallen, he expects and desires no popular approval. In fact, such approval would be to him a sort of reproach, signifying a diminution in the inherent value of the thing approved: for Spenser, like his great peers, and like the majority of master-workmen in all crafts not primarily useful, submitted his art to no court of the people. His friend Sidney characterized the poet as 'the right popular philosopher' who offered food for the tenderest stomachs, but, as the context shows, he was asserting nothing more than the simplicity of the poet's method of instruction as against the obscurity of the philosopher's. And Spenser admittedly colored the *Faerie Queene* with 'an historicall fiction,' because 'the most part of men' delight to read fiction; but throughout his poetry, there are indications that he turned for the verdict upon his work to the descendents of Aristotle's *ideal spectator*, to the persons who were called, by Shakespeare, *the judicious*, and who were to form for Milton an *audience fit though few*. This attitude toward criticism could easily become intolerable, verging as it seems, when first considered, upon an unwarranted fastidiousness. But in order to understand it, one has only to remember that the great poets regard themselves, first of all, as teachers, whose lives are devoted to the people in a cause too sacred for any tampering or profanation. They hold the truth, and it is their divine responsibility to

impart it unsullied, its inner form and its outer in an accord which may make an adaptation to popular standards an impossibility and a lie. In so far, then, as Spenser shared the opinion of all great poets, he must, along with them, be defended from the democrat who clamors with indignation at what he is pleased to call the aristocratic assumptions of art. We must not be surprised or unduly grieved to discover that Spenser concludes the *Epilogue* to the *Shepheardes Calender* with this injunction:

> The better please, the worse despise: I aske no more.

It is expressive of his entire attitude, his rating of the majority. 'The eies of them, that pas' do not see perfect things except in a glass which blinds them, and makes them think all gold that glisters. The vulgar have 'feeble skill of perfect things'; the world gapes at what it cannot understand, and wonders foolishly, but it is better that it should do that and rest content, than that it should aspire to judge. Slanderous infamy, in the guise of the *Blatant Beast*, lies in wait for learned wits and for the rime of gentle poets; the *Faerie Queene* need not hope to escape. The fairer aspects and meanings of things are always hidden from the common view: the base-bred have never extoled the true poet. Yet there is a way open for him who would win the applause of the multitude: Ignorance, with his 'accursed brood,' Error, Follie, and Spight, have easily enough caught the ears of the crowd; they pipe and sing to the vulgar sort, and delight them with fooleries and 'fond new-fanglenesse.' In his letter in Latin verse to Harvey, Spenser writes (Grosart, 1. 431):

> In fine, whoever his brows with wreaths would bind.
> And with the favouring crowd approval find,

> Learns foolishly to trifle, and lays claim
> To folly's idle praise which merits shame.

And with some bitterness, Spenser says that Harvey too, if he would obtain the Poet's honored bay, must, however he sings and builds his rime, 'play the fool to please the time.' All this might sound intolerant and might make us suspect a lack of goodwill, were it not for the fact, mentioned above, that the great poets have been always conscious of a teacher's mission, and labored incessantly to bring more of mankind into the light. When Spenser explains the object and aim of the *Faerie Queene* to Sir Walter Raleigh, and when, during a conversation at one of the meetings in Ludovick Bryskett's Irish cottage, he amplifies his explanation, we believe him; we know that his purpose was sincere and loving, and that underneath his quaintly pompous statement that he designed to represent all the moral virtues and to discourse at large in his poem concerning 'the Ethicke part of Morall Philosophie,' was the ardor of the poet-teacher who yearned to increase the number of the judicious until he counted not a fit few, but a fit multitude as his audience.

Spenser chose to make his great poem an allegory; but no amount of searching will reveal any full expression from him of his theory concerning allegory. In the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, he writes: 'Sir, knowing how doubtfully all allegories may be construed, and this boke of mine, which I have entituled the *Faery Queene*, being a continued allegory, or darke conceit, I have thought good, as well for your better light in reading therof (being so by you commanded), to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular pur-

poses or by accidents therein occasioned. The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read rather for variety of matter then for profite of the ensample, I chose the historye of King Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of envy, and suspition of present time.'

It is interesting to compare this letter with Tasso's account of the allegory of *Jerusalem Delivered*. Both poets find it at least expedient to explain, to some degree, their general intention and meaning in the allegorical figures and situations out of which they build their poems. Tasso begins his statement as follows:

'Heroical Poetry, as a living creature, wherein two natures are conjoined, is compounded of Imitation and Allegory: with the one she allureth unto her the minds and ears of men, and marvelously delighteth them; with the other, either in virtue or knowledge, she instructeth them. And as the heroically written Imitation of another is nothing else but the pattern and image of human action; so the Allegory of an Heroical Poem is none other than the glass and figure of Human Life.

'But imitation regardeth the actions of man subjected to the outward senses, and about them being principally employed, seeketh to represent them with effectual and expressive phrases, such as lively set before our corporeal eyes the things represented. It doth not consider the customs, affections, or discourses

of the mind, as they be inward, but only as they come forth thence and being manifested in words, in deeds, or working, do accompany the action. On the other side, Allegory respecteth the opinions and customs not only as they do appear, but principally in their being hidden and inward.'[1]

Spenser says not half so much, but it seems very likely that he had Tasso in mind: may not his 'historicall fiction' which for its profit of example, delights most men, be equivalent to what Tasso calls Imitation, and which is, he says, the very pattern and image of human action, and marvelously delights the minds and ears of men? As Spenser looks to the allegory of his poem to furnish the profitable example, so Tasso likewise looked to it to instruct in virtue or knowledge. We have the more reason to allow the passage from the earlier poet to illumine the thought of the later, because the later confessedly looks to the example of the earlier. Whether or not Spenser succeeded in his undertaking, whether he was able to produce an illusion, a credible effect out of this mixture of fact and fancy, is a question with which we cannot properly deal. His theory and his intention alone concern us.

By way of conclusion, let us turn for a moment to Spenser's critics.[2] His contemporaries recognized in him a 'new poet,' and gave him the title: he revealed to them the melody and richness of the English language which, since Chaucer's day, had suffered

[1] Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, tr. Fairfax, *The Carisbroke Library* 7. 436.

[2] The following incomplete account of the criticism of Spenser was written before the author had seen Herbert E. Corey's study, entitled, *The Critics of Edmund Spenser*. (Berkeley, The University Press 1911.)

under awkward hands. Church says of him that he revived 'the suspended art of Chaucer,' and England was quick to respond to this revival. There was, or at least there remains to us, little adverse comment. His good friend Sidney was a trifle guarded, and in his *Defense of Poesy*, which was written before the appearance of the *Faerie Queene* had only this to say of him: 'The Shepherd's Calendar hath much poetry in his eclogues, indeed worthy the reading, if I be not deceived. That same framing of his style to an old rustic language I dare not allow, since neither Theocritus in Greek, Virgil in Latin, nor Sannazzaro in Italian did affect it.'[1] But the praise is rescued from faintness by the context, in which Chaucer, Sackville, and Surrey are the only other writers who are even mentioned as worthy to represent English poetry. Later on, Jonson too expressed a dislike for Spenser's archaisms, and said that in affecting the ancients he 'writ no language.'[2] And E. K. in the *Epistle*, with which he introduced the *Shepheardes Calender*, felt impelled to discuss at considerable length our poet's 'choyse of old and unwonted words'; to explain it, excuse it, applaud it, and, generally, to prepare the public for it. William Webbe in *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1659) says:

'This place haue I purposely reserued for one, who if not only, yet in my iudgement principally deserueth the tytle of the rightest English Poet, that euer I read: that is the Author of the *Sheepeheardes Kalender*, intituled to the worthy gentleman Master Philipp Sidney: Whether it was Master Sp. or what rare Scholler in Pembrooke Hall soeuer, because himself and his freendes, for what respect I knowe not, would not

[1] Sidney, *Defense of Poesie*, ed. Cook, p. 47.

[2] Jonson, *Timber or Discoveries*, ed. Schelling, p. 57.

reueale it, I force not greatly to sette downe: sorry I am that I can not find none other whith whom I might couple him in this Catalogue, in his rare gyft of Poetry.'[1]

Further on in the same *Discourse* (p. 51), we find this:

'But now yet at y^e^ last hath England hatched vppe one Poet of this sorte, in my conscience comparable with the best in any respect: euen Master Sp.: Author of the *Sheepeheardes Calendar*, whose trauell in that peece of English Poetrie, I thinke verely, is so commendable, as none of equall iudgment can yeelde him lesse prayse for his excellent skyll, and skylfull excelency shewed foorth in the same, then they would to eyther Theocritus or Virgill, who in mine opinion, if the coursenes of our speeche (I meane the course of custome which he woulde not infringe) had beene no more let vnto him, then theyr pure natiue tongues were unto them, he would haue (if it might be) surpassed them. What one thing is there in them so worthy admiration, whereunto we may not adioyne something of his, of equall desert?'

Puttenham, in his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589) writes:

'For Eglogue and pastorall Poesie, Sir Philip Sidney, and Maister Calenner, and that other Gentleman who wrate the late Shepheardes Callender,' deserve 'the hyest price.'[2]

In a letter to the 'Gentlemen Students of both Universities,' which prefaces Greene's Menaphon (1589), Thomas Nash says:

'And should the challenge of deepe conceit be intruded by a forreiner, to bring our English wits to the tutchstone of Arte, I would preferre diuine Master

[1] William Webbe, in Haslewood's *Critical Essays*, 2. 36.

[2] George Puttenham, in Haslewood's *Critical Essays*, 1. 51.

Spencer, the miracle of wit to bandie line for line for my life, in the honor of *England*, gainst *Spaine*, *France*, *Italie*, and all the worlde.'[1]

In 1602 Francis Meres published a study entitled *A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets.* Here Spenser's name appears frequently: 'As Homer and Virgil among the Greeks and Latines are the chiefe Heroick Poets: so Spenser and Warner be our chiefe heroicall makers.'[2] And in the same vein he mentions those among the Greeks and Latins illustrious for 'elegie,' 'idyllia,' 'eclogs,' and pastorals, and places Spenser's name in the accompanying list of comparable English poets. Finally, Meres associates the names of Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, Shakespeare and Warner, and pronounces their work immortal.

Edmund Bolton, again, early in the 17th century, is tried with Spenser's old outworn phraseology; the ground of his censure, however, is that our poet's example is 'of very little use for the writers of history.' He cites his Hymns with approval, but 'for practick English' cannot recommend his other poems.[3]

So much for the estimation in which the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries held Spenser. We cannot stop to point out the constantly appearing references to him in later critical writings; we must content ourselves with saying that we hear of him everywhere, and trace his influence where we do not find his name. His students, as their considera-

[1] Robert Greene, *Menaphon*, ed. Arber, *The English Scholar's Library of Old and Modern Works*, p. 16.

[2] Francis Meres, *A Comparative Discourse*, in Haslewood's *Critical Essays* 2. 153.

[3] Edmund Bolton, *Hypercritica*, in Haslewood's *Critical Essays* 2. 247, 249.

tion of his work is prompted by unlike interests, may differ in their judgment; they may lay stress upon totally divergent characteristics of his nature or qualities of his style, but in acknowledging the debt that literature owes him, in loving him for his fancy, his delight in beauty, his abundant imagery, his exquisite control of metre, his smoothness and sweetness, his magic, in short for his 'poetical faculty': in acknowledging and loving these things, and in pointing out, in addition, his lofty conception of the function of art, they are in accord. He modestly called himself *Immerito* and *Colin Clout*; his contemporaries dubbed him the *New Poet*: but in the light of the service that he has rendered to the literature of poetry, we may with Charles Lamb in a warmth of sentiment that precludes sentimentality, give him tho most familiar of all his titles, the Poets' Poet.

ILLUSTRATIVE PASSAGES

They her besought, of favour speciall,
Of that faire castle to affoord them vew:
Shee graunted, and them leading forth, the same did shew.

First she them led up to the castle wall,
That was so high as foe might not it clime,
And all so faire and fensible withall;
Not built of bricke, ne yet of stone and lime,
But of thing like to that Aegytian slime,
Whereof King Nine whilome built Babell towre:
But O great pitty that no lenger time
So goodly workemanship should not endure!
Soone it must turne to earth: no earthly thing is sure.

The frame thereof seemd partly circulare,
And part triangulare: O worke divine!
Those two the first and last proportions are;
The one imperfect, mortall, fœminine,
Th' other immortall, perfect, masculine:
And twixt them both a quadrate was the base,
Proportioned equally by seven and nine;
Nine was the circle sett in heavens place:
All which compacted made a goodly diapase.

Therein two gates were placed seemly well:
The one before, by which all in did pas,
Did th' other far in workmanship excell;
For not of wood, nor of enduring bras,
But of more worthy substance fram'd it was:
Doubly disparted, it did locke and close,
That when it locked, none might thorough pas,
And when it opened, no man might it close;
Still open to their friendes, and closed to their foes.

Of hewen stone the porch was fayrely wrought,
Stone more of valew, and more smooth and fine,
Then jett or marble far from Ireland brought;
Over the which was cast a wandring vine,
Enchaced with a wanton yvie twine,
And over it a fayre portcullis hong,
Which to the gate directly did incline,
With comely compasse and compacture strong,
Nether unseemly short, nor yet exceeding long.
F. Q. 2. 9. 20–24.

Up to a stately turret she them brought,
Ascending by ten steps of alabaster wrought.

That turrets frame most admirable was,
Like highest heaven compassed around,
And lifted high above this earthly masse,
Which it survewd, as hils doen lower ground:
But not on ground mote like to this be found;
Not that, which antique Cadmus whylome built
In Thebes, which Alexander did confound;
Nor that proud towre of Troy, though richly guilt,
From which young Hectors blood by cruell Greekes was spilt.

The roofe hereof was arched over head,
And deckt with flowers and herbars daintily:
Two goodly beacons, set in watches stead,
Therein gave light, and flamd continually;
For they of living fire most subtilly
Were made, and set in silver sockets bright,
Cover'd with lids deviz'd of substance sly,
That readily they shut and open might.
O who can tell the prayses of that makers might?

Ne can I tell, ne can I stay to tell
This parts great workemanship and wondrous powre,
That all this other worldes worke doth excell,
And likest is unto that heavenly towre,
That God hath built for his own blessed bowre.
F. Q. 2. 9. 44–47.

Long were it to describe the goodly frame
And stately port of Castle Joyeous. *F. Q.* 3. 1. 31.

That was a temple faire and auncient,
Which of great mother Venus bare the name,
And farre renowmed through exceeding fame;
Much more then that which was in Paphos built,
Or that in Cyprus, both long since this same,
Though all the pillours of the one were guilt,
And all the others pavement were with yvory spilt.

And it was seated in an island strong,
Abounding all with delices most rare,
And wall'd by nature gainst invaders wrong
That none mote have accesse, nor inward fare,
But by one way, that passage did prepare.
It was a bridge ybuilt in goodly wize,
With curious corbes and pendants graven faire,
And, arched all with porches, did arize
On stately pillours, fram'd after the Doricke guize.
F. Q. 4. 10. 5–6.

The championesse them greeting, as she could,
Was thence by them into the temple led;
Whose goodly building when she did behould,
Borne uppon stately pillours, all dispred
With shining gold, and arched over hed,
She wondred at the workemans passing skill,
Whose like before she never saw nor red;
And thereuppon long while stood gazing still,
But thought that she thereon could never gaze her fill.
F. Q. 5. 7. 5.

ART

(a) Liberal Arts.

He, noble bud, his grandsires livelie hayre,
Under the shadow of thy countenaunce
Now ginnes to shoote up fast, and flourish fayre

In learned artes and goodlie governaunce,
That him to highest honour shall advaunce.
Brave impe of Bedford, grow apace in bountie,
And count of wisedome more than of thy countie.
R. of T. 267–273.

And thou our syre, that raignst in Castalie
And Mount Parnasse, the god of goodly arts.
Muses 57–58.

But shame and sorrow and accursed case
Have they that scorne the schoole of arts divine,
Muses 519–520.

The great Mecenas of this age,
As wel to al that civil artes professe,
As those that are inspir'd with martial rage.
13 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.* 9–11.

Greece, the nourse of all good arts. *F. Q.* 2. 9. 48.

Whom Alma having shewed to her guestes,
Thence brought them to the second rowme, whose wals
Were painted faire with memorable gestes
Of famous wisards, and with picturals
Of magistrates, of courts, of tribunals,
Of common wealthes, of states, of pollicy,
Of lawes, of judgementes, and of decretals;
All artes, all science, all philosophy,
And all that in the world was ay thought wittily.
F. Q. 2. 9. 53.

Whose footsteps Bladud following, in artes
Exceld at Athens all the learned preace,
From whence he brought them to these salvage parts,
And with sweet science mollifide their stubborne harts.
F. Q. 2. 10. 25.

Joy to you both, ye double noursery
Of arts! but, Oxford, thine doth Thame most glorify.
F. Q. 4. 11. 26.

For arts of schoole have there small countenance,
Counted but toyes to busie ydle braines,
And there professours find small maintenance,
But to be instruments of others gaines. *Colin* 703–706.

For well I wot, that there amongst them bee
Full many persons of right worthie parts,
Both for report of spottesse honestie,
And for profession of all learned arts. *Colin* 750–752.

All trades therfore, it is to be understood, are to be of thre kindes, manuall, intellectual, and mixt. The first contayning all such as needeth exercise of bodylye labour to the perfourmaunce of theyr profession; the other consisting onelye of the exercise of witt and reason; the third sort, partly of bodelye labour, and partly of witt, but depending most of industrye and carefulness. Of the first sorte be all handicraftes and husbandrye labour. Of the second be all sciences, and those which are called the liberall artes. Of the thirde is marchandize and chafferie, that is, buying and selling; and without all these three there is noe commonwealth can allmost consist, or at the least be perfect. *Ireland*, p. 677.

(b) Skill in a special Art, or Skill in general.

Yet was not that same her owne native hew,
But wrought by art and counterfetted shew.
F. Q. 2. 7. 45.

A porch with rare device,
Archt over head with an embracing vine,
Whose bounches, hanging downe, seemd to entice
All passers by to taste their lushious wine,
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
And them amongst, some were of burnisht gold,
So made by art to beautify the rest. *F. Q.* 2. 12. 54, 55.

The charet decked was in wondrous wize
With gold and many a gorgeous ornament,
After the Persian Monarks antique guize,
Such as the maker selfe could best by art devize.
F. Q. 4. 3. 38.

The sweet eye-glaunces, that like arrowes glide,
The charming smiles, that rob sence from the hart,
The lovely pleasance, and the lofty pride,
Cannot expressed be by any art. *Amor.* 17. 9–12.

When I behold that beauties wonderment,
And rare perfection of each goodly part,
Of Natures skill the only complement,
I honor and admire the Makers art. *Amor.* 24. 1–4.

But tell me (I pray you) have they [the Irish] any arte in theyr compositions? Or be they anything wittye or well savoured, as Poems should be? *Ireland,* p. 641.

And some vaynlye thinke that they [memorial stones in Ireland] were never placed there by mans hand or arte. *Ireland,* p. 643.

(c) Business or Calling.

Some clarkes doe doubt in their devicefull art,
Whether this heavenly thing whereof I treat,
To weeten Mercie, be of Justice part,
Or drawne forth from her by divine extreate.
F. Q. 5. 10. 1.

(d) Magic.

For pleasing wordes are like to magick art,
That doth the charmed snake in slomber lay.
F. Q. 3. 2. 15.

Tho, when all other helpes she saw to faile,
She turnd her selfe backe to her wicked leares,
And by her divelish arts thought to prevaile,
To bring her backe againe, or worke her finall bale.
F. Q. 3. 7. 21.

Thereto she learned was in magicke leare,
And all the artes that subtill wits discover,
Having therein bene trained many a yeare,
And well instructed by the Fay her mother,
That in the same she farre exceld all other.
Who, understanding by her mightie art
Of th' evill plight in which her dearest brother
Now stood, came forth in hast to take his part,
And pacifie the strife which causd so deadly smart.
F. Q. 4. 3. 40.

(e) Deceit, Blandishment, Cunning, Stratagem.

A dolefull case desires a dolefull song,
Without vaine art or curious complements.
Muses 541–542.

And ever and anone, when none was ware,
With speaking lookes, that close embassage bore,
He rov'd at her, and told his secret care:
For all that art he learned had of yore. *F. Q.* 3. 9. 28.

Where force might not availe, there sleights and art
She cast to use, both fitt for hard emprize:
F. Q. 3. 12. 28.

So great a mistresse of her art she was,
And perfectly practiz'd in womans craft, *F. Q.* 4. 2. 10.

In all which time, Sir Artegall made way
Unto the love of noble Britomart,
And with meeke service and much suit did lay
Continuall siege unto her gentle hart:

Which being whylome launcht with lovely dart,
More eath was new impression to receive,
How ever she her paynd with womanish art
To hide her wound, that none might it perceive:
Vaine is the art that seekes it selfe for to deceive.
F. Q. 4. 6. 40.

Yet he with strong perswasions her asswaged,
And wonne her will to suffer him depart;
For which his faith with her he fast engaged,
And thousand vowes from bottome of his hart,
That all so soone as he by wit or art
Could that atchieve, whereto he did aspire,
He unto her would speedily revert. *F. Q.* 4. 6. 43.

Mongst which, Serena did to him relate
The foule discourt'sies and unknightly parts,
Which Turpine had unto her shewed late,
Without compassion of her cruell smarts,
Although Blandina did with all her arts
Him otherwise perswade, all that she might.
F. Q. 6. 5. 33.

A filed toung furnisht with tearmes of art,
No art of schoole, but courtier's schoolery.
Colin 701–702.

And when I weep, she sayes teares are but water,
And when I sigh, she sayes I know the art,
And when I waile, she turnes hir selfe to laughter.
Amor. 18. 10–18.

Sweet smile, the daughter of the Queene of Love,
Expressing all thy mothers powrefull art,
With which she wonts to temper angry Jove,
When all the gods he threats with thundring dart.
Amor. 39. 1–4.

ART AND NATURE

Their mother was a Fay, and had the skill
Of secret things, and all the powres of nature,
Which she by art could use unto her will,
And to her service bind each living creature,
Through secret understanding of their feature.
F. Q. 4. 2. 44.

Was it the worke of Nature or of Art,
Which tempred so the feature of her face [?]
Amor. 21–22.

See also Landscape-Gardening, Nature.

THE POET'S AUDIENCE

O pierlesse Poesye, where is then thy place?
If nor in princes pallace thou doe sitt,
(And yet is princes pallace the most fitt)
Ne brest of baser birth doth thee embrace.
S. C., October, 79–82.

The better please, the worse despise; I aske no more.
S. C., Epilogue, 12.

So am I [the muse of comedy] made the servant of the manie
And laughing stocke of all that list to scorne.
Muses 223–224.

To you, right noble Lord, whose carefull brest
To menage of most grave affaires is bent,
* * * * * * * * * * *
Unfitly I these ydle rimes present,
The labor of lost time, and wit unstayd:
Yet if their deeper sence be inly wayd,
And the dim vele, with which from comune vew
Their fairer parts are hid, aside be layd,
Perhaps not vaine they may appeare to you.
9 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.* 1–2, 7–12.

So feeble skill of perfect things the vulgar has.
F. Q. 5. 3. 17

But in the triall of true Curtesie,
Its now so farre from that which then it was,
That it indeed is nought but forgerie,
Fashion'd to please the eies of them that pas.
Which see not perfect things but in a glas:
Yet is that glasse so gay that it can blynd
The wisest sight, to thinke that gold is bras.
F. Q. 6, *Prologue* 5.

The world, that cannot deeme of worthy things,
When I doe praise her, say I doe but flatter:
So does the cuckow, when the mavis sings,
Begin his witlesse note apace to clatter.
But they that skill not of so heavenly matter,
All that they know not, envy or admyre:
Rather then envy, let them wonder at her,
But not to deeme of her desert aspyre. *Amor.* 84. 1–8.

In fine, whoe'er his brows with wreaths would bind,
And with the favouring crowd approval find,
Learns foolishly to trifle, and lays claim
To folly's idle praise which merits shame.
Letter in Latin verse to Harvey. Grosart 1. 433.

(Spenser, in the same letter, declares that Harvey too, if he would obtain 'the Poet's honoured bay,' must, however he sings and builds the lofty rhyme, 'play the fool to please the time.')

See also Comedy, Decline in Poetic Appreciation.

COMEDY

Where be the sweete delights of learnings treasure,
That wont with comick sock to beautefie
The painted theaters, and fill with pleasure
The listners eyes, and eares with melodie;

In which I late was wont to raine as queene,
And maske in mirth with graces well beseene?

O, all is gone! and all that goodly glee,
Which wont to be the glorie of gay wits,
Is layd abed, and no where now to see;
And in her roome unseemly Sorrow sits,
With hollow browes and greisly countenaunce,
Marring my joyous gentle dalliaunce.

And him beside sits ugly Barbarisme,
And brutish Ignorance, ycrept of late
Out of dredd darknes of the deep abysme,
Where being bredd, he light and heaven does hate:
They in the mindes of men now tyrannize,
And the faire scene with rudenes foule disguize.

All places they with follie have possest,
And with vaine toyes the vulgare entertaine;
But me have banished, with all the rest
That whilome wont to wait upon my traine,
Fine Counterfesaunce and unhurtfull Sport,
Delight and Laughter deckt in seemly sort.

All these, and all that els the comick stage
With seasoned wit and goodly pleasance graced,
By which mans life in his likest image
Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced;
And those sweete wits which wont the like to frame
Are now despizd, and made a laughing game.

And he, the man whom Nature selfe had made
To mock her selfe, and truth to imitate,
With kindly counter under mimick shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late:
With whom all joy and jolly meriment
Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.

In stead thereof scoffing Scurrilitie,
And scornful Follie with Contempt is crept,

Rolling in rymes of shameles ribaudrie
Without regard, or due decorum kept;
Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
And doth the learneds taske upon him take.

But that same gentle spirit, from whose pen
Large streames of honnie and sweete nectar flowe,
Scorning the boldnes of such base-borne men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashlie throwe,
Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell,
Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell.

So am I made the servant of the manie,
And laughing stocke of all that list to scorne,
Not honored nor cared for of anie;
But loath'd of losels as a thing forlorne:
Therefore I mourne and sorrow with the rest,
Untill my cause of sorrow be redrest. *Muses* 175–228.

DECLINE IN POETIC APPRECIATION

Like as the dearling of the summers pryde,
Faire Philomele, when winters stormie wrath
The goodly fields, that earst so gay were dyde
In colours divers, quite despoyled hath,
All comfortlesse doth hide her chearlesse head
During the time of that her widowhead:

So we, that earst were wont in sweet accord
All places with our pleasant notes to fill,
Whilest favourable times did us afford
Free libertie to chaunt our charmes at will,
All comfortlesse upon the bared bow,
Like wofull culvers, doo sit wayling now.

For far more bitter storme than winters stowre
The beautie of the world hath lately wasted,
And those fresh buds, which wont so faire to flowre,
Hath marred quite and all their blossoms blasted:

And those yong plants, which wont with fruit t' abound,
Now without fruit or leaves are to be found.

A stonie coldnesse hath benumbed the sence
And livelie spirits of each living wight,
And dimd with darknese their intelligence,
Darknese more than Cymerians daylie night:
And monstrous Error, flying in the ayre,
Hath mard the face of all that semed fayre.

Image of hellish horrour, Ignorance,
Borne in the bosome of the black abysse,
And fed with Furies milke, for sustenaunce
Of his weake infancie, begot amisse
By yawning Sloth on his owne mother Night;
For he his sonnes both syre and brother hight:

He, armd with blindnesse and with boldnes stout,
(For blind is bold) hath our fayre light defaced;
And gathering unto him a ragged rout
Of faunes and satyres, hath our dwellings raced,
And our chast bowers, in which all vertue rained,
With brutishnesse and beastlie filth hath stained.

The sacred springs of horsefoot Helicon,
So oft bedeawed with our learned layes,
And speaking streames of pure Castalion,
The famous witnesse of our wonted praise,
They trampled have with their fowle footings trade,
And like to troubled puddles have them made.

Our pleasant groves, which planted were with paines,
That with our musick wont so oft to ring,
And arbors sweet, in which the shepheards swaines
Were wont so oft their pastoralls to sing,
They have cut downe, and all their pleasaunce mard,
That now no pastorall is to bee hard. *Muses* 235–282.

To whom shall I [Calliope] my evill case complaine,
Or tell the anguish of my inward smart,

Sith none is left to remedie my paine,
Or deignes to pitie a perplexed hart;
But rather seekes my sorrow to augment
With fowle reproach, and cruell banishment?

For they to whom I used to applie
The faithfull service of my learned skill,
The goodly off-spring of Joves progenie,
That wont the world with famous acts to fill;
Whose living praises in heroick style,
It is my chiefe profession to compyle;

They all corrupted through the rust of time,
That doth all fairest things on earth deface,
Or through unnoble sloth, or sinfull crime,
That doth degenerate the noble race,
Have both desire of worthie deeds forlorne,
And name of learning utterly doo scorne.

Ne doo they care to have the auncestrie
Of th' old heroës memorizde anew;
Ne doo they care that late posteritie
Should know their names, or speak their praises dew:
But die forgot from whence at first they sprong,
As they themselves shalbe forgot ere long.

Muses 421–444

So now he [the Blatant Beast] raungeth through the world
againe,
And rageth sore in each degree and state;
Ne any is, that may him now restraine,
He growen is so great and strong of late,
Barking and biting all that him doe bate,
Albe they worthy blame, or cleare of crime:
Ne spareth he most learned wits to rate,
Ne spareth he the gentle poets rime,
But rends without regard of person or of time.

Ne may this homely verse, of many meanest,
Hope to escape his venemous despite,

More then my former writs, all were they cleanest
From blamefull blot, and free from all that wite,
With which some wicked tongues did it backebite,
And bring into a mighty peres displeasure,
That never so deserved to endite.
Therfore do you, my rimes, keep better measure,
And seeke to please, that now is counted wise mens threasure.
F. Q. 6. 12. 40–41.

See also Poet's Audience, Decline in Worth of Poetry.

DECLINE IN WORTH OF POETRY

Wee, that earst in joyance did abound,
And in the bosome of all blis did sit,
Like virgin queenes with laurell garlands cround,
For vertues meed and ornament of wit,
Sith Ignorance our kingdome did confound,
Bee now become most wretched wightes on ground.

And in our royall thrones, which lately stood
In th' hearts of men to rule them carefully,
He now hath placed his accursed brood,
By him begotten of fowle Infamy;
Blind Error, scornefull Follie, and base Spight,
Who hold by wrong that wee should have by right.

They to the vulgar sort now pipe and sing,
And make them merrie with their fooleries;
They cherelie chaunt and rymes at random fling,
The fruitfull spawne of their ranke fantasies;
They feede the eares of fooles with flattery,
And good men blame, and losels magnify.

All places they doo with their toyes possesse,
And raigne in liking of the multitude;
The schooles they fill with fond newfanglenesse,
And sway in court with pride and rashnes rude;
Mongst simple shepheards they do boast their skill,
And say their musicke matcheth Phoebus quill.

The noble hearts to pleasures they allure,
And tell their Prince that learning is but vaine;
Faire ladies loves they spot with thoughts impure,
And gentle minds with lewd delights distaine;
Clerks they to loathly idlenes entice,
And fill their bookes with discipline of vice.

So every where they rule and tyrannize,
For their usurped kingdomes maintenaunce,
The whiles we silly maides, whom they dispize
And with reprochfull scorne discountenaunce,
From our owne native heritage exilde,
Walk through the world of every one revilde.

Nor anie one doth care to call us in,
Or once vouchsafeth us to entertaine,
Unlesse some one perhaps of gentle kin,
For pitties sake, compassionate our paine,
And yeeld us some reliefe in this distresse;
Yet to be so reliev'd is wretchednesse.

So wander we all carefull comfortlesse,
Yet none doth care to comfort us at all;
So seeke we helpe our sorrow to redresse,
Yet none vouchsafes to answere to our call:
Therefore we mourne and pittilesse complaine,
Because none living pittieth our paine. *Muses* 307–354.

For the sweet numbers and melodious measures,
With which I wont the winged words to tie,
And make a tunefull diapase of pleasures,
Now being let to runne at libertie
By those which have no skill to rule them right,
Have now quite lost their naturall delight.

Heapes of huge words uphoorded hideously,
With horrid sound, though having little sence,
They thinke to be chiefe praise of poëtry;
And thereby wanting due intelligence,
Have mard the face of goodly poësie,
And made a monster of their fantasie.

Whilom in ages past none might professe,
But princes and high priests, that secret skill;
The sacred lawes therein they wont expresse,
And with deepe oracles their verses fill;
Then was shee held in soveraigne dignitie,
And made the noursling of nobilitie.

But now nor prince nor priest doth her maintayne,
But suffer her prophaned for to bee
Of the base vulgar, that with hands uncleane
Dares to pollute her hidden mysterie;
And treadeth under foote hir holie things,
Which was the care of kesars and of kings.

One onelie lives, her ages ornament,
And myrrour of her Makers majestie;
That with rich bountie and deare cherishment
Supports the praise of noble poësie:
Ne onelie favours them which it professe,
But is here self a peereles poëtresse.

Most peereles prince, most peereles poëtresse,
The true Pandora of all heavenly graces,
Divine Elisa, sacred Emperesse:
Live she for ever, and her royall p'laces
Be fild with praises of divinest wits,
That her eternize with their heavenlie writs.

Some few beside this sacred skill esteme,
Admirers of her glorious excellence,
Which being lightned with her beawties beme,
Are thereby fild with happie influence,
And lifted up above the worldes gaze,
To sing with angels her immortall praize.

But all the rest, as borne of salvage brood,
And having beene with acorns alwaies fed,
Can no whit savour this celestiall food,
But with base thoughts are into blindnesse led,
And kept from looking on the lightsome day:
For whome I waile and weepe all that I may. *Muses* 547–593.

'And is Love then,' said Corylas, 'once knowne
In court, and his sweet lore professed there?
I weened sure he was our god alone,
And only woond in fields and forests here.'
'Not so,' quoth he, 'love most aboundeth there.
For all the walls and windows there are writ
All full of love, and love, and love my deare,
And all their talke and studie is of it.
Ne any there doth brave or valiant seeme,
Unlesse that some gay mistresse badge he beares:
Ne any one himselfe doth ought esteeme,
Unlesse he swim in love up to the eares.
But they of Love and of his sacred lere,
(As it should be) all otherwise devise,
Then we poore shepheards are accustomd here,
And him do sue and serve all otherwise. *Colin* 771–786.

(Courthope finds in the passage just quoted a reflection on the love poetry, 'the degraded vein of Petrarchism,' of the day.)

See also Comedy, Decline in Poetic Appreciation.

DECORUM OR PROPRIETY

In stead thereof scoffing Scurrilitie,
And scornfull Follie with Contempt is crept,
Rolling in rymes of shameles ribaudrie
Without regard or due decorum kept. *Muses* 211–214.

Such high conceipt of that celestiall fire,
The base-borne brood of Blindnes cannot gesse,
Ne ever dare their dunghill thoughts aspire
Unto so loftie pitch of perfectnesse,
But rime at riot, and doo rage in love;
Yet little wote what doth thereto behove. *Muses* 391–396.

And, were it not ill fitting for this file,
To sing of hilles and woods, mongst warres and knights,

I would abate the sternenesse of my stile,
Mongst these sterne sounds to mingle soft delights.
F. Q. 7. 6. 37.

INADEQUACY OF LANGUAGE, ETC., FOR THE PURPOSES OF EXPRESSION

From thence, far off he unto him did shew
A litle path, that was both steepe and long,
Which to a goodly citty led his vew;
Whose wals and towres were builded high and strong
Of perle and precious stone, that earthly tong
Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell;
Too high a ditty for my simple song:
The Citty of the Greate King hight it well,
Wherein eternal peace and happiness doth dwell.
F. Q. 1. 10. 55.

The blazing brightnesse of her beauties beame,
And glorious light of her sunshyny face,
To tell, were as to strive against the streame:
My ragged rimes are all too rude and bace,
Her heavenly lineaments for to enchace. *F. Q.* 1. 12. 23.

How shall frayle pen describe her heavenly face,
For feare, through want of skill, her beauty to disgrace?
F. Q. 2. 3. 25.

Who now shall give unto me words and sound,
Equall unto this haughty enterprise?
Or who shall lend me wings, with which from ground
My lowly verse may loftily arise,
And lift it selfe unto the highest skyes?
More ample spirit, then hetherto was wount,
Heere needes me, whiles the famous auncestryes
Of my most dreaded Soveraigne I recount,
By which all earthly princes she doth far surmount.
* * * * * * * * * * * *

A labor huge, exceeding far my might:
How shall fraile pen, with feare disparaged,
Conceive such soveraine glory, and great bountyhed?
F. Q. 2. 10. 1, 2.

Next him Tenantius raignd; then Kimbeline,
What time th' Eternall Lord in fleshly slime
Enwombed was, from wretched Adams line
To purge away the guilt of sinfull crime:
O joyous memorie of happy time,
That heavenly grace so plenteously displayd!
O too high ditty for my simple rime! *F. Q.* 2. 10. 50.

But for to tell the sumptuous aray
Of that great chamber should be labour lost:
For living wit, I weene, cannot display
The roiall riches and exceeding cost
Of every pillour and of every post. *F. Q.* 3. 1. 32.

But of all wisedom bee thou precedent,
O soveraine Queene, whose prayse I would endyte,
Endite I would as dewtie doth excyte;
But ah! my rymes to rude and rugged arre,
When in so high an object they doe lyte,
And, striving fit to make, I feare doe marre. *F. Q.* 3. 2. 3.

But the wyld man, contrarie to her feare,
Came to her creeping like a fawning hound,
And by rude tokens made to her appeare
His deepe compassion of her dolefull stound,
Kissing his hands, and crouching to the ground;
For other language had he none, nor speach,
But a soft murmure, and confused sound
Of senselesse words, which Nature did him teach,
T' express his passions, which his reason did empeach.
F. Q. 6. 4. 11.

(Art und Nature must coöperate before human expression becomes possible.)

Well I weene
That this same day, when she [Dame Nature] on Arlo sat,
Her garment was so bright and wondrous sheene,
That my fraile wit cannot devize to what
It to compare, nor finde like stuffe to that:
As those three sacred saints, though else most wise,
Yet on Mount Thabor quite their wits forgat,
When they their glorious Lord in strange disguise
Transfigur'd sawe; his garments so did daze their eyes.

* * * * * * * * *

So hard it is for any living wight
All her array and vestiments to tell,
That old Dan Geffrey (in whose gentle spright,
The pure well head of poesie did dwell)
In his *Foules Parley* durst not with it mel,
But it transferd to Alane, who he thought
Had in his *Plaint of Kinde* describ'd it well:
Which who will read set forth so as it ought,
Go seek he out that Alane where he may be sought.
F. Q. 7. 7. 7, 9.

For when I thinke of her, as oft I ought,
Then want I words to speake it fitly forth:
And when I speake of her what I have thought,
I cannot thinke according to her worth. *Colin* 624–627.

(The following example concerns the inadequacy of the painter's medium, and hints at the inadequacy of all media in human hands.)

The glorious pourtraict of that angels face,
Made to amaze weake mens confused skil,
And this worlds worthlesse glory to embase,
What pen, what pencill, can expresse her fill?
For though he colours could devize at will,
And eke his learned hand at pleasure guide,
Least, trembling, it his workmanship should spill,
Yet many wondrous things there are beside.
The sweet eye-glaunces, that like arrowes glide,

The charming smiles that rob sence from the hart,
The lovely pleasance, and the lofty pride,
Cannot expressed be by any art.
A greater craftesmans hand thereto doth neede,
That can expresse the life of things indeed.
Amor. 17. 7–14.

And give me words equall unto my thought,
To tell the marveiles of thy mercie wrought.
3 *Hymne* 48–49.

I faine to tell the things that I behold,
But feele my wits to faile, and tongue to fold.
4 *Hymne* 6–7.

How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse,
The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

Cease then, my tongue, and lend unto my mynd
Leave to bethinke how great that Beautie is.
4 *Hymne* 104–107.

See also Form (1) *and* (2), Imitation.

FAERIE QUEENE (1)

Spenser's depreciatory expressions in regard to the Faerie Queene.

Grosart says that Spenser was 'pathetically lowly in writing of his supremest poetry,' and instances the *Sonnets* prefixed to the *Faerie Queene.* The following expressions are gathered from them:

'Ydle rymes,' 'base poem,' 'first labours,' 'the unripe fruit of an unready wit,' 'the wilde fruit salvage soyl hath bred,' 'the fruit of barren field,' 'this small guift',

'Rude rymes, the which a rustick Muse did weave
In salvage soyle, far from Parnasso mount,
And roughly wrought in an unlearned loome,'

rusticke madrigal,' 'my rimes I know unsavory and sowre,' 'the labor of lost time and wit unstayd.'

Ded. Sonnets, F. Q.

FAERIE QUEENE (2)

Spenser's intention in writing the Faerie Queene.

Sir, knowing how doubtfully all allegories may be construed, and this booke of mine, which I have entituled the *Faerie Queene*, being a continued allegory, or dark conceit, I have thought good, as well for avoyding of jealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading therof, (being so by you commanded,) to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course therof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes or by accidents therein occasioned. The generale end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter then for profite of the ensample, I chose the historye of King Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from daunger of envy, and suspition of present time. In which I have followed all the antique poets historicall: first Homere, who in the persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governour and a vertuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis; then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Æneas; after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando; and lately Tasso dissevered them againe, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in philosophy call Ethice, or vertues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo; the other named Politice in his Godfredo. By ensample of which excellente poets, I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in

the twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised, the which is the purpose of these first twelve bookes: which if I finde to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encoraged to frame the other part of polliticke vertues in his person, after that hee came to be king. To some, I know, this methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then thus clowdily enwrapped in allegorical devises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfide with the use of these dayes, seeing all things accounted by their showes, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commone sence. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one, in the exquisite depth of his judgement, formed a commune welth such as it should be, but the other in the person of Cyrus and the Persians fashioned a governement, such as might best be: so much more profitable and gratious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule. So have I laboured to doe in the person of Arthure: whome I conceive, after his long education by Timon, to whom he was by Merlin delivered to be brought up, so soone as he was borne of the Lady Igrayne, to have seene in a dream or vision the Faery Queen, with whose excellent beauty ravished, he awaking resolved to seeke her out, and so being by Merlin armed, and by Timon throughly instructed, he went to seeke her forth in Faery Land. In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery Land. And yet, in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall queene or empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautifull lady, this latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belphoebe, fashioning her name according to your owne excellent conceipt of Cynthia, (Phœbe and Cynthia being both names of Diana). So in the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular, which vertue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and conteineth in it them all, therefore in the whole course

I mention the deedes of Arthure applyable to that vertue which I write of in that booke. But of the xii. other vertues I make xii. other knights the patrones, for the more variety of the history: of which these three bookes contayn three. The first of the Knight of the Redcrosse, in whome I expresse holynes: The seconde of Sir Guyon, in whom I sette forth temperaunce: The third of Britomartis, a lady knight, in whome I picture chastity. But because the beginning of the whole worke seemeth abrupte and as depending upon other antecedents, it needs that ye know the occasion of these three knights severall adventures. For the methode of a poet historical is not such as of an historiographer. For an historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a poet thrusteth into the middest, even where it most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the thinges forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing analysis of all.

The beginning therefore of my history, if it were to be told by an historiographer, should be the twelfth booke, which is the last; where I devise that the Faery Queene kept her annuall feaste xii. dayes, uppon which xii. severall dayes, the occasions of the xii. severall adventures hapned, which being undertaken by xii. severall knights, are in these xii. books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented him selfe a tale clownish younge man, who falling before the Queen of Faries, desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse: which was that hee might have the atchievement of any adventure, which during that feaste should happen: that being graunted, he rested him on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place. Soone after entred a faire ladye in mourning weedes, riding on a white asse, with a dwarfe behind her leading a warlike steed, that bore the armes of a knight, and his speare in the dwarfes hand. Shee, falling before the Queene of Faeries, complayned that her father and mother, an ancient king and queene, had bene by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brasen castle, who thence suffred them not to yssew: and

hertefore besought the Faery Queene to assygne her some one of her knights to take on him that exployt. Presently that clownish person, upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering, and the lady much gainesaying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the lady told him, that unlesse that armour which she brought would serve him (that is, the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul, vi. Ephes.), that he could not succeed in that enterprise: which being forthwith put upon him with dewe furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the lady. And eftesoones taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that straunge courser, he went forth with her on that adventure: where beginneth the first book, vz.

A gentle knight was pricking on the playne, &c.

The second day ther came in a palmer, bearing an infant with bloody hands, whose parents he complained to have bene slayn by an enchaunteresse called Acrasia: and therfore craved of the Faery Queene, to appoint him some knight to performe that adventure; which being assigned to Sir Guyon, he presently went forth with that same palmer: which is the beginning of the second booke and the whole subject thereof. The third day there came in a groome, who complained before the Faery Queene, that a vile enchaunter, called Busirane, had in hand a most faire lady, called Amoretta, whom he kept in most grievous torment, because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body. Whereupon Sir Scudamour, the lover of that lady, presently tooke on him that adventure. But being unable to performe it by reason of the hard enchauntments, after long sorrow, in the end met with Britomartis, who succoured him, and reskewed his love.

But by occasion hereof, many other adventures are intermedled, but rather as accidents then intendments: as the love of Britomart, the overthrow of Marinell, the misery of Florimell, the vertuousnes of Belphoebe, the lasciviousnes of Hellenora, and many the like.

Thus much, Sir, I have briefly overronne, to direct your understanding to the wel-head of the history, that from thence gathering the whole intention of the conceit, ye may, as in a handful, gripe al the discourse, which otherwise may happily seeme tedious and confused.

Letter to Raleigh, F. Q.

FORM (1)

Passages illustrative of the use of the word, and of its derivatives.

Through knowledge we behold the worlds creation
* * * * * * * * * * * *
And judge of Natures cunning operation
How things she formed of a formelesse mas.

Muses 499, 501–503.

Basting downe his towres, he did deforme
Coth borrowed pride, and native beautie stained.

V. of World's V. 8–9.

For by his mighty science he could take
As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
As ever Proteus to himselfe could make. *F. Q.* 1. 2. 10.

By every fournace many feendes did byde,
Deformed creatures, horrible in sight. *F. Q.* 2. 7. 35.

And fayre Philotime she rightly hight,
The fairest wight that wonneth under skye,
But that this darksom neather world her light
Doth dim with horror and deformity. *F. Q.* 2. 7. 49.

Of all Gods workes, which doe this world adorne,
There is no one more faire and excellent,
Then is mans body both for powre and forme,
Whiles it is kept in sober government;

But none then it more fowle and indecent,
Distempred through misrule and passions bace:
It growes a monster, and incontinent
Doth loose his dignity and native grace. *F. Q.* 2. 9. 1.

Most ugly shapes and horrible aspects,
Such as Dame Nature selfe mote feare to see,
Or shame that ever should so fowle defects
From her most cunning hand escaped bee;
All dreadfull pourtraicts of deformitee. *F. Q.* 2. 12. 23.

So, after Nilus inundation,
Infinite shapes of creatures men doe fynd,
Informed in the mud, on which the sunne hath shynd.
F. Q. 3. 6. 8.

All things from thence [Chaos] doe their first being fetch,
And borrow matter whereof they are made,
Which, whenas forme and feature it does ketch,
Becomes a body, and doth then invade
The state of life out of the griesly shade.
That substaunce is eterne, and bideth so,
Ne when the life decayes, and forme does fade,
Doth it consume and into nothing goe,
But chaunged is, and often altred to and froe.

The substaunce is not chaungd nor altered,
But th' only forme and outward fashion;
For every substaunce is conditioned
To chaunge her hew, and sondry formes to don,
Meet for her temper and complexion:
For formes are variable, and decay
By course of kinde and by occasion;
And that faire flowre of beautie fades away,
As doth the lilly fresh before the sunny ray.
F. Q. 3. 6. 37–38.

And sooth, it seemes, they say: for he [Adonis] may not
For ever dye, and ever buried bee

In balefull night, where all thinges are forgot:
All be he subject to mortalitie,
Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,
And by succession made perpetuall,
Transformed oft, and chaunged diverslie:
For him the father of all formes they call;
Therfore needs mote he live, that living gives to all.
F. Q. 3. 6. 47.

Als as she double spake, so heard she double,
With matchlesse eares deformed and distort. *F. Q.* 4. 1. 28.

For all that Nature by her mother wit
Could frame in earth, and forme of substance base
Was there. *F. Q.* 4. 10. 21.

For from the golden age, that first was named,
It's now at earst become a stonie one;
And men themselves, the which at first were framed,
Of earthly mould, and form'd of flesh and bone,
Are now transformed into hardest stone:
Such as behind their backs (so backward bred)
Were throwne by Pyrrha and Deucalione:
And if then those may any worse be red,
They into that ere long will be degendered.

Let none then blame me, if in discipline
Of vertue and of civill uses lore,
I doe not forme them to the common line
Of present dayes, which are corrupted sore,
But to the antique use which was of yore,
When good was onely for it selfe desyred.
F. Q. 5, *Prologue* 2–3.

He bad him stay, and backe with him retire;
Who, full of scorne to be commaunded so,
The lady to alight did eft require,
Whilest he reformed that uncivill fo:
And streight at him with all his force did go. *F. Q.* 5. 1. 21.

Sir Artegall undid the evill fashion,
And wicked customes of that bridge refourmed:
Which done, unto his former journey he retourned.
F. Q. 5. 2. 28.

O what an easie thing is to descry
The gentle bloud, how ever it be wrapt
In sad misfortunes foule deformity,
And wretched sorrowes, which have often hapt!
For howsoever it may grow mis-shapt,
Like this wyld man, being undisciplynd,
That to all vertue it may seeme unapt,
Yet will it shew some sparkes of gentle mynd,
And at the last breake forth in his owne proper kynd.
F. Q. 6. 5. 1.

Who ever is the mother of one chylde,
Which having thought long dead, she fyndes alive,
Let her by proofe of that which she hath fylde
In her owne breast, this mothers joy descrive:
For other none such passion can contrive
In perfect forme, as this good lady felt,
When she so faire a daughter saw survive. *F. Q.* 6. 12. 21.

Much like an angell in all forme and fashion. *Colin* 615.

Next gan the earth to shew her naked head,
Out of deep waters which her drownd alway.
And shortly after, everie living wight
Crept forth like wormes out of her slimie nature,
Soone as on them the suns life giving light
Had powred kindly heat and formall feature.
Colin 857–862.

And were it not that through your cruelty
With sorrow dimmed and deformd it were
The goodly image of your visnomy
Clearer than chrystall would therein appere.
Amor. 45. 9–12.

The glorious image of the Makers beautie,
My soverayne saynt, the idoll of my thought,
Dare not henceforth, above the bounds of dewtie,
T' accuse of pride, or rashly blame for ought.
For, being, as she is, divinely wrought,
And of the brood of angels hevenly borne,
And with the crew of blessed saynts upbrought,
Each of which did her with theyr guifts adorne,
The bud of joy, the blossome of the morne,
The beame of light, whom mortal eyes admyre,
What reason is it then but she should scorne
Base things, that to her love too bold aspire?
Such heavenly formes ought rather worshipt be,
Then dare be lov'd by men of meane degree. *Amor.* 61.

Such is the powre of that sweet passion,
That it all sordid basenesse doth expell,
And the refyned mynd doth newly fashion
Unto a fairer forme, which now doth dwell
In his high thought, that would it selfe excell;
Which he beholding still with constant sight,
Admires the mirrour of so heavenly light.
1 *Hymne* 190–196.

What time this worlds great workmaister did cast
To make al things such as we now behold,
It seemes that he before his eyes had plast
A goodly paterne, to whose perfect mould
He fashioned them as comely as he could,
That now so faire and seemely they appear
As nought may be amended any wheare.

That wondrous paterne, wheresoever it bee,
Whether in earth layd up in secret store,
Or else in heaven, that no man may it see
With sinfull eyes, for feare it to deflore,
Is perfect Beautie, which all men adore;
Whose face and features doth so much excell
All mortall sence, that none the same may tell:

Thereof as every earthly thing partakes
Or more or lesse, by influence divine,
So it more faire accordingly it makes,
And the grosse matter of this earthly myne,
Which clotheth it, thereafter doth refyne,
Doing away the drosse which dims the light
Of that faire beame which therein in empight.

For through infusion of celestiall powre
The duller earth it quickneth with delight,
And life-full spirits privily doth powre
Through all the parts, that to the lookers sight
They seeme to please. That is thy soveraine might,
O Cyprian queene, which, flowing from the beame
Of thy bright starre, thou into them doest streame.

That is the thing which giveth pleasant grace
To all things faire, that kindleth lively fyre,
Light of thy lampe, which, shyning in the face,
Thence to the soule darts amorous desyre,
And robs the harts of those which it admyre;
Therewith thou pointest thy sons poysned arrow,
That wounds the life, and wastes the inmost marrow.

How vainely then doe ydle wits invent
That Beautie is nought else but mixture made
Of colours faire, and goodly temp'rament
Of pure complexions, that shall quickly fade
And pass away, like to a sommers shade,
Or that it is but comely composition
Of parts well measured, with meet disposition!

Hath white and red in it such wondrous powre,
That it can pierce through th' eyes unto the hart,
And therein stirre such rage and restlesse stowre,
As nought but death can stint his dolours smart?
Or can proportion of the outward part
Move such affection in the inward mynd,
That it can rob both sense, and reason blynd?

Why doe not then the blossomes of the field,
Which are arayd with much more orient hew,
And to the sense most daintie odours yield,
Worke like impression in the lookers vew?
Or why do not faire pictures like powre shew,
In which of times we Nature see of Art
Exceld, in perfect limming every part?

But ah! believe me, there is more then so,
That workes such wonders in the minds of men.
I, that have often prov'd, too well it know;
And who so list the like assayes to ken
Shall find by tryall, and confesse it then,
That Beautie is not, as fond men misdeeme,
An outward shew of things that only seeme.

For that same goodly hew of white and red,
With which the cheekes are sprinckled, shall decay,
And those sweete rosy leaves, so fairely spred
Upon the lips, shall fade and fall away
To that they were, even to corrupted clay.
That golden wyre, those sparckling stars so bright
Shall turne to dust, and loose their goodly light.

But that faire lampe, from whose celestiall ray
That light proceedes which kindleth lovers fire,
Shall never be extinguisht nor decay;
But when the vitall spirits doe expyre,
Unto her native planet shall retyre;
For it is heavenly borne, and can not die,
Being a parcell of the purest skie.

For when the soule, the which derived was,
At first, out of that great immortall spright,
By whom all live to love, whilome did pas
Downe from the top of purest heavens light,
To be embodied here, it then tooke light
And lively spirits from that fayrest starre,
Which lights the world forth from his firie carre.

Which powre retayning still, or more or lesse,
When she in fleshly seede is eft enraced,
Through every part she doth the same impresse,
According as the heavens have her graced,
And frames her house, in which she will be placed,
Fit for her selfe, adorning it with spoyle
Of th' heavenly riches which she robd erewhyle.

Thereof it comes that these faire soules, which have
The most resemblance of that heavenly light,
Frame to themselves most beautifull and brave
Their fleshly bowre, most fit for their delight,
And the grosse matter by a soveraine might
Tempers so trim, that it may well be seene
A pallace fit for such a virgin queene.

So every spirit, as it is most pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it the fairer bodie doth procure
To habit in, and is more fairely dight
With chearefull grace and amiable sight.
For of the soule the bodie forme doth take:
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

Therefore, where ever that thou doest behold
A comely corpse, with beautie faire endewed,
Know this for certaine, that the same doth hold
A beauteous soule, with faire conditions thewed,
Fit to receive the seede of vertue strewed.
For all that faire is, is by nature good;
That is a signe to know the gentle blood.

Yet oft it falles that many a gentle mynde
Dwels in deformed tabernacle drownd,
Either by chaunce, against the course of kynd,
Or through unaptnesse in the substance fownd,
Which it assumed of some stubborne grownd,
That will not yield unto her form direction,
But is deform'd with some foule imperfection.

And oft it falles (ay me, the more to rew!)
That goodly Beautie, albe heavenly borne,
Is foule abusd, and that celestiall hew,
Which doth the world with her delight adorne,
Made but the bait of sinne, and sinners scorne;
Whilest every one doth seeke and sew to have it,
But every one doth seeke but to deprave it.

Yet nathemore is that faire Beauties blame,
But theirs that do abuse it unto ill:
Nothing so good, but that through guilty shame
May be corrupt, and wrested unto will.
Nathelesse the soule is faire and beauteous still,
How ever fleshes fault it filthy make:
For things immortall no corruption take.

But ye, faire dames, the worlds deare ornaments,
And lively images of heavens light,
Let not your beames with such disparagements
Be dimd, and your bright glorie darkned quight,
But mindfull still of your first countries sight
Doe still preserve your first informed grace,
Whose shadow yet shynes in your beauteous face.

Loath that foule blot, that hellish fierbrand,
Disloiall lust, faire Beauties foulest blame,
That base affections, which your eares would bland,
Commend to you by loves abused name;
But is indeede the bondslave of defame;
Which will the garland of your glorie marre,
And quench the light of your bright shyning starre.

But gentle love, that loiall is and trew,
Will more illumine your resplendent ray,
And adde more brightnesse to your goodly hew,
From light of his pure fire, which, by like way
Kindled of yours, your likenesse doth display,
Like as two mirrours, by opposd reflexion,
Doe both expresse the faces first impression.

Therefore, to make your beautie more appeare,
It you behoves to love, and forth to lay
That heavenly riches which in you ye beare,
That men the more admyre their fountaine may;
For else what booteth that celestiall ray,
If it in darknesse be enshrined ever,
That it of loving eyes be vewed never?

But in your choice of loves, this well advize,
That likest to your selves ye them select,
The which your forms first sourse may sympathize,
And with like beauties parts be inly deckt:
For if you loosely love without respect,
It is no love, but a discordant warre,
Whose unlike parts amongst themselves do jarre.

For love is a celestiall harmonie
Of likely harts composd of starres concent,
Which joyne together in sweete sympathie,
To worke ech others joy and true content,
Which they have harbourd since their first descent
Out of their heavenly bowres, where they did see
And know ech other here belov'd to bee.

Then wrong it were that any other twaine
Should in loves gentle band combyned bee,
But those whom Heaven did at first ordaine,
And made out of one mould the more t' agree:
For all that like the beautie which they see
Streight do not love: for love is not so light,
As streight to burne at first beholders sight.

But they which love indeede looke otherwise,
With pure regard and spotlesse true intent
Drawing out of the object of their eyes
A more refyned forme, which they present
Unto their mind, voide of all blemishment;
Which it reducing to her first perfection,
Beholdeth free from fleshes frayle infection.

And then conforming it unto the light,
Which in it selfe it hath remaining still,
Of that first sunne, yet sparckling in his sight,
Thereof he fashions in his higher skill
An heavenly beautie to his fancies will,
And it embracing in his mind entyre
The mirrour of his owne thought doth admyre.

Which seeing now so inly faire to be,
As outward it appeareth to the eye,
And with his spirits proportion to agree,
He thereon fixeth all his fantasie,
And fully setteth his felicitie,
Counting it fairer then it is indeede,
And yet indeede her fairnesse doth exceede.

2 *Hymne* 29–231.

Therefore of clay, base, vile and next to nought,
Yet formed by wondrous skill, and by his might,
According to an heavenly patterne wrought,
Which he had fashioned in his wise foresight,
He man did make and breathd a living spright
Into his face most beautifull and fayre,
Endewd with wisedomes riches, heavenly, rare.

3 *Hymne* 106–112.

But that wretched realm of Ireland wanteth the most principall of them, ['the trades,'] that is, the intellectuall; therfore in seeking to reforme her state it is specially to be looked unto. *Ireland*, p. 677.

Irenæus advocates the creation of a new officer in Ireland, whose duty it shall be to bring in stragglers, etc. Eudoxus answers:

'Me thinkes it is an unnecessarye charge, and also unfitt to continue the name or forme of any marshall lawe, when as there is a proper officer allreadye appoynted for these turnes.' *Ireland*, p. 679.

Therfore I would wish that there were order taken to have them [the Irish churches] builte in some better forme, according to the churches of England; for the outward shewe (assure yourselfe) doth greatlye drawe the rude people to the reverencing and frequenting therof, what ever some of our late to nice fooles saye,—"ther is nothing in the seemelye forme and comely orders of the churches."

Ireland, p. 680.

See also Platonic Ideas.

FORM (2)

Passages illustrative of the general notion of 'form'.

I wote my rymes bene rough, and rudely drest:
The fytter they my carefull case to frame.

S. C. June 77–78.

A doleful case desires a doleful song,
Without vaine art or curious complements,
And squallid fortune into baseness flong,
Doth scorne the pride of wonted ornaments,
Then fittest are these ragged rimes for mee,
To tell my sorrowes that exceeding bee. *Muses* 541–546.

Heapes of huge words uphoorded hideously,
With horrid sound, though having little sence,
They thinke to be chiefe praise of poetry;
And thereby wanting due intelligence,
Have mard the face of goodly poesie,
And made a monster of their fantasie. *Muses* 553–558.

'Fayre sir,' sayd he, 'if in that picture dead
Such life ye read, and vertue in vaine shew,
What mote ye weene, if the trew livelyhead
Of that most glorious visage ye did vew?
But yf the beautie of her mind ye knew,
That is, her bounty and imperiall powre,

Thousand times fairer then her mortal hew,
O how great wonder would your thoughts devoure,
And infinite desire into your spirite poure!' *F. Q.* 2. 9. 3.

In 'reviving' Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*, Spenser says of his undertaking:

Through infusion sweete
Of thine owne spirit, which doth in me survive,
I follow here the footing of thy feete,
That with thy meaning so I may the rather meete.
F. Q. 4. 2. 34.

And therin sate a ladie passing faire
And bright, that seemed borne of angels brood,
And with her beautie bountie did compare,
Whether of them in her should have the greater share.
F. Q. 4. 3. 39.

True is that whilome that good poet sayd,
The gentle minde by gentle deeds is knowne:
For a man by nothing is so well bewrayd
As by his manners, in which plaine is showne
Of what degree and what race he is growne.
For seldome seene, a trotting stalion get
An ambling colt, that is his proper owne:
So seldome seene, that one in basenesse set
Doth noble courage shew, with curteous manners met.

But evermore contrary hath bene tryde,
That gentle bloud will gentle manners breed.
F. Q. 6. 3. 1.

Compare the following passages from Chaucer:

Looke, who that is moost vertuous alway,
Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he kan,
Taak hym for the grettest gentil man.
Wife of Bath's Tale, 1. 1113–1116.

He is gentil thet dooth gentil dedis. Ibid. 1. 1170.

In purenesse and in all celestiall grace,
That men admire in goodlie womankinde,
She did excell and seem'd of angels race
Living on earth like angell new divinde,
Adorn'd with wisedome and with chastitie,
And all the dowries of a noble mind,
Which did her beautie much more beautifie.
Daph. 211–217.

You frame my thoughts, and fashion me within.
Amor. 8. 9.

For loe! my love doth in her selfe containe
All this worlds riches that may farre be found:
If saphyres, loe! her eies be saphyres plaine;
If rubies, loe! hir lips be rubies sound;
If pearles, hir teeth be pearles both pure and round;
If yvorie, her forhead yvorie weene;
If gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;
If silver, her faire hands are silver sheene:
But that which fairest is but few behold,
Her mind, adornd with vertues manifold. *Amor.* 15. 5–14.

When I behold that beauties wonderment,
And rare perfection of each goodly part,
Of Natures skill the only complement,
I honor and admire the Makers Art. *Amor.* 24. 1–4.

Ah! why hath Nature to so hard a hart
Given so goodly giftes of beauties grace,
Whose pryde depraves each other better part,
And all those pretious ornaments deface?
Sith to all other beastes of bloody race
A dreadful countenaunce she given hath,
That with theyr terrour al the rest may chace,
And warne to shun the daunger of theyr wrath,
But my proud one doth worke the greater scath,
Through sweet allurement of her lovely hew,

That she the better may in bloody bath
Of such poore thralls her cruell hands embrew.
But did she know how ill these two accord,
Such cruelty she would have soone abhord. *Amor.* 31.

The panther, knowing that his spotted hyde
Doth please all beasts, but that his looks them fray,
Within a bush his dreadfull head doth hide,
To let them gaze, whylest he on them may pray.
Right so my cruell fayre with me doth play:
For with the goodly semblant of her hew
She doth allure me to mine owne decay,
And then no mercy will unto me shew.
Great shame it is, thing so divine in view,
Made for to be the worlds most ornament,
To make the bayte her gazers to embrew:
Good shames to be so ill an instrument:
But mercy doth with beautie best agree,
As in theyr Maker ye them best may see. *Amor.* 53.

So oft as I her beauty doe behold,
And therewith doe her cruelty compare,
I marvaile of what substance was the mould
The which her made attonce so cruell faire.
Not earth; for her high thoghts more heavenly are:
Not water; for her love doth burne like fyre:
Not ayre; for she is not so light or rare:
Not fyre; for she doth friese with faint desire.
Then needs another element inquire,
Whereof she mote be made; that is the skye.
For to the heaven her haughty looks aspire,
And eke her mind is pure immortall hye.
Then sith to heaven ye lykened are the best,
Be lyke in mercy as in all the rest. *Amor.* 55.

For all that faire is, is by nature good;
That is a sign to know the gentle blood.
2 *Hymne* 139–140.

For all thats good is beautiful and faire. 4 *Hymne* 133.

'The mynd followeth much the temperature of the bodye; and also the woordes are the Image of the mynd, soe as, they proceeding from the mynd, the mynd must needes be affected with the woordes. Soe that the speache being Irish, the harte must needes be Irish; for out of the aboundaunce of the harte, the tonge speaketh.' *Ireland*, p. 638.

See also INADEQUACY OF LANGUAGE, ETC., FORM (1), PLATONIC IDEAS.

FUNCTION OF POETRY

O what an honor is it, to restraine
The lust of lawlesse youth with good advice,
Or pricke them forth with pleasaunce of thy vaine,
Whereto thou list their trayned willes entice!
S. C., October 21–24.

Loe! I have made a Calender for every yeare,
* * * * * * * * * * * * *
To teach the ruder shepheard how to feede his sheepe.
S. C., Epilogue, 1, 5.

Let not sweete poets praise, whose onely pride
Is vertue to advaunce, and vice deride,
Be with the worke of losels wit defamed,
Ne let such verses poetrie be named. *Prosopopoia* 810–813.

The generall end therefore of all the booke [the *Faerie Queene*] is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline. *Letter to Raleigh, F. Q.*

To some, I know, this methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in the way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, than thus cloudily enrapped in allegoricall devices.
Letter to Raleigh, F. Q.

Those prudent heads, that with theire counsels wise
Whylom the pillours of th'earth did sustaine,
And taught ambitious Rome to tyrannise,
And in the neck of all the world to rayne,
Oft from those grave affaires were wont abstaine,
With the sweet Lady Muses for to play:
So Ennius the elder Africane,
So Maro oft did Caesars cares allay.
So you, great Lord, that with your counsell sway
The burdeine of this kingdom mightily,
With like delightes sometimes may eke delay
The rugged brow of carefull Policy;
And to these ydle rymes lend litle space,
Which for their titles sake may find more grace.

1 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.*

To tell the glorie of the feast that day,
The goodly service, the devicefull sights,
The bridegromes state, the brides most rich aray,
The pride of ladies, and the worth of knights,
The royall banquets, and the rare delights
Were worke fit for an herauld, not for me:
But for so much as to my lot here lights,
That with this present treatise doth agree,
True vertue to advance, shall here recounted bee.

F. Q. 5. 3. 3.

Therefore do you, my rimes, keep better measure,
And seeke to please, that now is counted wisemens threasure.

F. Q. 6. 12. 41.

Iren. There is amongest the Irish a certayne kind of people called Bards, which are to them insteede of poets, whose profession is to sett foorth the prayses and disprayses of men in theyr poems and rimes; the which are had in soe high request and estimation amongest them, that none dare to displease them for feare of running into reproche through theyr offence, and to be made infamous in the mouthes of

all men. For theyr verses are taken up with a generall applause, and usually songe at all feasts and meetings, by certayne other persons, whose proper function that is, which also receave for the same greate rewardes and reputation besides.

Eudox. Doe you blame this in them, which I would otherwise have thought to have bene woorthy of good accounte, and rather to have bene mayntayned and augmented amongest them, then to have bene misliked? For I have reade that in all ages Poettes have bene had in speciall reputation, and that (me seemes) not without greate cause; for besides theyr sweete inventions, and most wittye layes, they have allwayes used to sett foorth the prayses of the good and vertuous, and to beate downe and disgrace the badd and vicious. Soe that many brave yong myndes have oftentimes, through hearing of the prayses and famous Eulogies of woorthy men song and reported unto them, bene stirred up to affect like comendacions, and soe to strive to like desertes. Soe they say the Lacedemonians were more inclined to desire of honour with the excellent verses of the Poet Tirtaeus, then with all the exhortations of their Captaines, or authoritye of theyr Rulers and Magistrates.

Iren. It is most true that such Poetts, as in theyr writings doe laboure to better the manners of men, and through the sweete bayte of theyr numbers, to steale into yonge spiritts a desire of honour and vertue, are worthy to be had in great respect. But these Irish Bards are for the most part of another mynd, and soe farr from instructing yong men in morall discipline, that they themselves doe more desarve to be sharpely disciplined; for they seldome use to choose unto themselves the doinges of good men for the ornamentes of theyr poems, but whomsoever they find to be most licentious of life, most bold and lawless in his doinges, most daungerous and desperate in all partes of disobedience and rebellious disposition, him they sett up and glorifye in theyr rimes, him they prayse to the people, and to yong men make an example to followe.

Eudox. I marvayle what kinde of speeches they can find,

or what face they can putt on, to prayse such lewde persons as live soe lawleslye and licentiouslye upon stealthes and spoyles, as most of them doe; or how can they thinke that any good mynde will applaude or approve the same?

Iren. There is none soe badd, Eudoxus, but shall finde some to favoure his doinges; but such lycentious partes as these, tending for the most parte to the hurte of the English, or mayntenaunce of theyre owne lewde libertye, they themselves, being most desirous therof, doe most allowe. Besides this, evill thinges being decked and suborned with the gay attyre of goodly woordes, may easely deceave and carrye away the affection of a yong mynd, that is not well stayed, but desirous by some bold adventure to make proofe of himself; for being (as they all be) brought up idelly without awe of parentes, without precepts of masters, without feare of offence, not being directed, or employed in any course of life, which may carrye them to vertue, will easely be drawen to followe such as any shall sett before them: for a yong mynd cannot rest; and yf he be not still busyed in some goodness, he will find himself such busines as shall soone busye all about him. In which yf he shall finde any to prayse him, and to give him encouragement, as those Bards and rimers doe for a litle reward, or a share of a stollen cowe, then waxeth he most insolent and half madd with the love of himself, and his owne lewde deedes. And as for woordes to sett foorth such lewdness, it is not hard for them to give a goodly glose and paynted shewe thereunto, borrowed even from the prayses which are proper to vertue it self. As of a most notorious theif and wicked outlawe, which had lived all his lifetime of spoyles and robberyes, one of these Bardes in his prayse sayd, that he was none of those idell milk-sops that was brought up by the fire side, but that most of his dayes he spent in armes and valyaunt enterprises: that he did never eate his meate before he had wonne it with his swoorde; that he was not slugging all night in a cabin under his mantell, but used comonly to keepe others waking to defend theyr lives, and did light his candell at the flames of theyr howses to leade him in the darkeness; that the day

was his night, and the night his day; that he loved not to lye long wooing of wenches to yeeld unto him, but where he came he tooke by force the spoyle of other mens love, and left but lamentations to theyr lovers; that his musicke was not the harpe, nor layes of love, but the cryes of people, and clashing of armour; and that finally, he died not bewayled of many, but made many wayle when he died that dearely bought his death. Doe not you thinke, (Eudoxus) that many of these prayses might be applyed to men of best desarte? Yet are they all yeelded to a most notable traytoure, and amongest some of the Irish not smally accounted of. For the songe, when it was first made and songe unto a person of high degree, they were bought (as their manner is) for forty crownes.

Eudox. And well worthye sure! But tell me (I pray you) have they any arte in theyr compositions? Or be they any thing wittye or well savoured, as Poems should be?

Iren. Yea truly; I have caused diverse of them to be translated unto me that I might understand them; and surely they savoured of sweet witt and good invention, but skilled not of the goodly ornamentes of Poetrye: yet were they sprinckled with some prety flowers of theyr owne naturall devise, which gave good grace and comliness unto them, the which it is greate pittye to see soe abused, to the gracing of wickedness and vice, which would with good usage serve to beautifye and adorne vertue. This evill custome therfore needeth reformation. *Ireland*, p. 641.

I minde shortely . . . to sette forth a booke . . . whyche I entitle *Epithalamion Thamesis*, whyche booke I dare undertake wil be very profitable for the knowledge, and rare for the invention and manner of handling.

Letter to Harvey, April, 1580.

See also Faerie Queene (2), Power of Poetry.

GENEROSITY TOWARD FELLOW-POETS

Cambden, the nourice of antiquitie,
And lanterne unto late succeeding age,
To see the light of simple veritie
Buried in ruines, through the great outrage
Of her owne people, led with warlike rage,
Cambden, though Time all moniments obscure,
Yet thy just labours ever shall endure. *R. of T.* 169–175.

He [Raleigh] pip'd, I sung, and when he sung, I piped,
By chaunge of turnes, each making other mery,
Neither envying other, nor envied,
So piped we, untill we both were weary. *Colin* 76–79.

In *Colin*. Spenser enumerates the good poets then alive, and begins his praise thus:

For better shepheards be not under skie,
Nor better hable, when they list to blow
Their pipes aloud, her name to glorifie. *Colin* 377–379.

There eke is Palin, worthie of great praise,
Albe he envie at my rustick quill. *Colin* 393–394.

GOLDEN MEAN

But he the right from thence did thrust away,
For it was not the right which he did seeke;
But rather strove extremities to way,
Th' one to diminish, th' other for to eeke:
For of the meane be greatly did misleeke. *F. Q.* 5. 2. 49.

For all things, wheresoe'er you look around,
With nought but fools and foolishness abound.
But lo, amidst the whirling stream is seen
A central way of safety yet, I ween.

He who desires to figure in men's eyes
As neither too unwise, nor yet too wise,
To him alone the Wise man's name you give:
He in the *via media* strives to live.
Letter in Latin verse to Harvey, Grosart, 1. 433.

HISTORY AND POETRY

Spenser colors the *Faerie Queene* 'with an historicall fiction' in order to make it 'plausible and pleasing,' and because most men delight to read for the 'variety of matter, rather than for profite of the ensample.' He says: 'The methode of a poet historical is not such as of an historiographer. For an historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a poet thrusteth into the middest, even where it most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the thinges forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing analysis of all.' *Letter to Raleigh. F. Q.*

IMAGINATION (1)

Passages illustrating the use of the word or some form of it.

Therefore he her did court, did serve, did wooe,
With humblest suit that he imagine mot,
And all things did devise, and all things dooe,
That might her love prepare, and liking win theretoo.
F. Q. 4. 2. 8.

Believe me, this observation of yours, Irenaeus, is very good and delightful: farr beyond the blunt conceit of some, who (I remember) have upon the same woord *Farrih*, made a very gross conjecture; as namely Mr. Stanihurst, who though he be the same country-man borne, that should search more neerely into the secrett of these thinges, yet hath strayed from the truth all the heavens wide (as they say) for he

thereupon groundeth a very gross imagination that the Irish should discend from the Ægyptians which came into that iland, first under the leading of one Scota the daughter of Pharao, whereupon they use (sayth he) in all theyr battels to call upon the name of Pharao, crying *Farrih, Farrih.*
Ireland, p. 632.

Ye have very well declared the originall of these mountes and greate stones incompassed, which some vaynlye terme the old Gyaunts Trivette, and thinke that those huge stones could not els be brought into order or reared up without the strength of gyaunts of others. And some vaynlye thinke that they were never placed there by mans hand or arte, but onely remayned there since the beginning, and were afterwardes discovered by the deluge, and layed open as then by the washing of the waters, or other like casualtye. But lett them with those dreames and vayne imaginations please themselves; for you have satysfied me much better, both by that I see some confirmation therof in Holye Writt, and also remember that I have reade in many Historyes and Chronicles the like mounts and stones oftentimes mentioned.
Ireland, p. 643.

Spenser, in one of his letters to Harvey, wrote, if we may judge from Harvey's reply, that his delights at the moment, a moment apparently 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' proceeded from 'some strange mellancholy conceites and speculative imaginations dicoursid at large' in his brain and fancy. Cf. *Harvey's 'Last Letter'*, Grosart 1. 74.

IMAGINATION (2)

Passages illustrating Spenser's conception of the quality of imagination.

Love wont to be schoolmaster of my skill,
And the deviceful matter of my song. *Muses* 385–386.

'Surely they [the poems of the Irish bards] savoured of sweete witt and good invention, but skilled not of the goodly ornaments of Poetrye: yet were they sprinkled with somt prety flowers of theyr owne naturall devise, which gave good grace and comliness unto them.' *Ireland*, p. 641.

IMITATION

All these, and all that els the comick stage
With seasoned wit and goodly pleasance graced,
By which mans life in his likest image
Was limmed forth, are wholly now defaced.
* * * * * * * * * * * *
And he the man whom Nature selfe had made
To mock her selfe, and truth to imitate,
With kindly counter under mimick shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late.
Muses 199–202, 205–208.

Spenser, in speaking of the contest in needlework between Minerva and Arachne, repeatedly emphasizes the successful imitation in their tapestries:

Arachne figur'd how Jove did abuse
Europa like a bull, and on his backe
Her through the sea did beare; so lively seene,
That it true sea and true bull ye would weene.

She seem'd still backe unto the land to looke,
And her play-fellowes aide to call, and feare
The dashing of the waves, that up she tooke
Her daintie feete, and garments gathered neare:
But (Lord!) how she in everie member shooke,
When as the land she saw no more appeare,
But a wilde wildernes of waters deepe!
Then gan she greatly to lament and weepe.
Muiopotmos 277–288.

Emongst those leaves she made a butterflie,
With excellent device and wondrous slight,
Fluttring among the olives wantonly.
That seem'd to live, so like it was in sight:
The velvet nap which on his wings doth lie,
The silken downe with which his backe is dight,
His broad outstretched hornes, his hayrie thies,
His glorious colours, and his glistering eies.

Muiopotmos 329–336.

And thou, O fayrest Princesse under sky,
In this fayre mirrhour maist behold thy face,
And thine owne realmes in lond of Faery,
And in this antique ymage thy great auncestry.

F. Q. 2, *Prologue* 4.

It falls me here to write of Chastity,
That fayrest vertue, far above the rest;
For which what needes me fetch from Faery
Forreine ensamples, it to have exprest?
Sith it is shrined in my Soveraines brest,
And formd so lively in each perfect part,
That to all ladies, which have it profest,
Needе but behold the pourtraict of her hart,
If pourtrayd it might bee by any living art.

F. Q. 3, *Prologue* 1.

But if in living colours, and right hew,
Your selfe you covet to see pictured,
Who can it doe more lively or more trew,
Then that sweete verse, with nectar sprinckeled,
In which a gracious servaunt pictured
His Cynthia, his heavens fayrest light?
* * * * * * * * * *
But let that same delitious poet lend
A little leave unto a rusticke Muse
To sing his mistresse prayse, and let him mend,
If ought amis her liking may abuse:

Ne let his fayrest Cynthia refuse,
In mirrours more then one her selfe to see,
But either Gloriana let her chuse,
Or in Belphoebe fashioned to bee:
In th' one her rule, in th' other her rare chastitee.
F. Q. 3, *Prologue* 4–5.

By their advise, and her owne wicked wit,
She there deviz'd a wondrous worke to frame,
Whose like on earth was never framed yit,
That even Nature selfe envide the same,
And grudg'd to see the counterfet should shame
The thing it selfe. In hand she boldly tooke
To make another like the former dame,
Another Florimell, and shape and looke
So lively and so like that many it mistooke.
F. Q. 3. 8. 5.

But he their sonne full fresh and jolly was,
All decked in a robe of watchet hew,
On which the waves, glittering like christall glas,
So cunningly enwoven were, that few
Could weenen whether they were false or trew.
F. Q. 4. 11. 27.

See also Inadequacy of Language, etc., Landscape-Gardening, Poetic Imaging.

IMMORTALITY OF VERSE

Loe! I have made a Calender for every yeare,
That steele in strength, and time in durance, shall outweare:
And if I marked well the starres revolution,
It shall continewe till the worlds dissolution.
S. C. Epilogue 1–4.

Thy lord shall never die, the whiles this verse
Shall live, and surely it shall live for ever:

For ever it shall live, and shall rehearse
His worthie praise, and vertues dying never,
Though death his soule doo from his bodie sever.
And thou thy selfe herein shalt also live;
Such grace the heavens doo to my verses give.
R. of T. 253–259.

But such as neither of themselves can sing.
Nor yet are sung of others for reward,
Die in obscure oblivion, as the thing
Which never was, ne ever with regard
Their names shall of the later age be heard.
R. of T. 344–348.

Provide therefore (ye princes) whilst ye live,
That of the Muses ye may friended bee,
Which unto men eternitie do give;
For they be daughters of Dame Memorie
And Jove, the father of Eternitie,
And do those men in golden thrones repose,
Whose merits they to glorifie do chose.

The seven fold yron gates of grislie Hell
And horrid house of sad Proserpina,
They [the Muses] able are with power of mightie spell
To breake, and thence the soules to bring awaie
Out of dread darknesse to eternal day,
And them immortall make, which els would die
In foule forgetfulnesse, and nameles lie.
R. of T. 365–378.

So happie are they, and so fortunate,
Whom the Pierian sacred sisters love,
That freed from bands of impacable fate,
And power of death, they live for aye above,
Where mortall wreakes their blis may not remove:
But with the gods, for former vertues meede,
On nectar and ambrosia do feede.

For deeds doe die, how ever noblie donne,
And thoughts of men do as themselves decay,
But wise wordes taught in numbers for to runne
Recorded by the Muses, live for ay,
Ne may with storming showers be washt away;
Ne bitter breathing windes with harmfull blast,
Nor age, nor envie, shall them ever wast.

In vaine doo earthly princes then, in vaine,
Seeke with pyramides, to heaven aspired,
Or huge colosses, built with costlie paine,
Or brasen pillours, never to be fired,
Or shrines, made of the mettall most desired,
To make their memories for ever live:
For how can mortall immortalitie give?

Such one Mausolus made, the worlds great wonder
But now no remnant doth thereof remaine:
Such one Marcellus, but was torne with thunder:
Such one Lisippus, but is worne with raine:
Such one King Edmond, but was rent for gaine.
All such vaine moniments of earthlie masse,
Devour'd of Time, in time to nought doo passe.

But Fame with golden wings aloft doth flie,
Above the reach of ruinous decay,
And with brave plumes doth beate the azure skie,
Admir'd of base-borne men from farre away:
Then who so will with vertuous deeds assay
To mount to heaven, on Pegasus must ride,
And with sweete poets verse be glorifide.

For not to have been dipt in Lethe lake
Could save the sonne of Thetis from to die;
But that blinde bard did him immortall make
With verses, dipt in deaw of Castalie:
Which made the Easterne conquerour to crie,
O fortunate yong-man, whose vertue found
So brave a trompe thy noble acts to sound!

'Therefore in this halfe happie I doo read
Good Melibae, that hath a poet got,
To sing his living praises being dead.
R. of T. 393–438. (Cf. below *F. Q.* 2. 9. 21.)

Bellay, first garland of free poësie
That France brought forth, though fruitfull of brave wits,
Well worthie thou of immortalitie,
That long hast traveld by thy learned writs,
Olde Rome out of her ashes to revive,
And give a second life to dead decayes:
Needes must he all eternitie survive,
That can to other give eternal dayes.
R. of R., L'Envoy. 1–8.

The sacred Muses have made alwaies clame
To be the nourses of nobility,
And registres of everlasting fame,
To all that armes professe and chevalry.
4 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.* 1–4.

Thy praises everlasting monument
Is in this verse engraven semblably,
That it may live to all posterity.
6 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.* 12–14.

Live, Lord, for ever in this lasting verse,
That all posteritie thy honor may reherse.
11 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.* 13–14.

Or like that pleasant mount, that is for ay
Through famous poets verse each where renownd,
On which the thrise three learned ladies play,
Their hevenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay.
F. Q. 1. 10. 54.

Poetry alone of the fine arts possesses lasting qualities; the architect's work perishes. In speaking of the House of Temperance, Spenser says:

But O great pitty that no lenger time
So goodly workemanship should not endure!
Soone it must turne to earth: no earthly thing is sure.
F. Q. 2. 9. 21. (Cf. above, *R. of T.* 393–438.)

Me seemes I see Amintas wretched fate,
To whom sweet poets verse hath given endlesse date.
F. Q. 3. 6. 45.

That goodly idoll, now so gay beseene,
Shall doffe her fleshes borowd fayre attyre,
And be forgot as it had never beene,
That many now much worship and admire.
Ne any then shall after it inquire,
Ne any mention shall thereof remaine,
But what this verse, that never shall expyre,
Shall to you purchas with her thankles paine.
Faire, be no lenger proud of that shall perish,
But that which shall you make immortall cherish.
Amor. 27. 5–14.

Even this verse, vowd to eternity,
Shall be thereof immortall moniment,
And tell her prayse to all posterity. *Amor.* 69. 9–11.

My verse your vertues rare shall eternize. *Amor.* 75. 11.

Som hevenly wit, whose verse could have enchased
Your glorious name in golden moniment. *Amor.* 82. 7–8.

Song, made in lieu of many ornaments
With which my love should duly have bene dect,
* * * * * * * * * * *
Be unto her a goodly ornament,
And for short time an endlesse moniment.
Epithal. 427–428, 432–433.

For life and death is in thy [Harvey's] downeful writing:
So thy renowme lives ever by endighting. *Sonnet to Harvey.*

INSPIRATION

In Cuddie is set out the perfecte paterne of a poete, whiche, finding no maintenaunce of his state and studies, complayneth of the contempte of Poetrie, and the causes thereof: specially having bene in all ages, and even amongst the most barbarous, alwayes of singular accounpt and honor, and being indede so worthy and commendable an arte: or rather no arte, but a divine gift and heavenly instinct, not to bee gotten by laboure and learning, but adorned with both, and poured into the witte by a certain ἐνθουσιασμός and celestiall inspiration; as the author hereof els where at large discourseth in his booke called *The English Poete*, which booke being lately come to my hands, I mynde also by Gods grace, upon further advisement, to publish. *S. C., October*, E. K.'s 'Argument.'

O pierlesse Poesye, * * * *
* * make thee winges of thine aspiring wit,
And, whence thou camst, flye backe to heaven apace.
S. C., October 79, 83–84.

Who ever casts to compasse weightye prise,
And thinks to throwe out thondring words of threate,
Let powre in lavish cups and thriftie bitts of meate;
For Bacchus fruite is frend to Phoebus wise,
And when with wine the braine begins to sweate,
The nombers flow as fast as spring doth ryse.

Thou kenst not, Percie, howe the ryme should rage.
O if my temples were distaind with wine,
And girt in girlonds of wild yvie twine,
How I could reare the Muse on stately stage,
And teache her tread aloft in buskin fine,
With queint Bellona in her equipage!
S. C., October 103–114.

Now, O thou sacred Muse, most learned dame,
Fayre ympe of Phoebus, and his aged bryde,

The nourse of time and everlasting fame,
That warlike handes ennoblest with immortall name;

O gently come into my feeble brest,
Come gently, but not with that mightie rage,
Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest infest,
And hartes of great heroës doest enrage,
That nought their kindled corage may aswage:
Soone as thy dreadfull trompe begins to sownd,
The god of warre with his fiers equipage
Thou doest awake, sleepe never he so sownd,
And scared nations doest with horror sterne atownd.

Fayre goddesse, lay that furious fitt asyde,
Till I of warres and bloody Mars doe sing,
And Bryton fieldes with Sarazin blood bedyde,
Twixt that great Faery Queene and Paynim King,
That with their horror heven and earth did ring,
A work of labour long, and endlesse prayse:
But now a while lett downe that haughtie string,
And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
That I this man of God his godly armes may blaze.
F. Q. 1. 11. 5–7.

The waies, through which my weary steps I guyde,
In this delightfull land of Faery,
Are so exceeding spacious and wyde,
And sprinckled with such sweet variety
Of all that pleasant is to eare or eye,
That I, nigh ravisht with rare thoughts delight,
My tedious travell doe forget thereby;
And when I gin to feele decay of might,
It strength to me supplies, and chears my dulled spright.

Such secret comfort and such heavenly pleasures,
Ye sacred imps, that on Parnasso dwell,
And there the keeping have of learnings threasures,
Which doe all wordly riches farre excell,
Into the mindes of mortall men doe well,

And goodly fury into them infuse;
Guyde ye my footing, and conduct me well
In these strange waies, where never foote did use,
Ne none can find, but who was taught them by the Muse.

Revele to me the sacred noursery
Of Vertue, which with you doth there remaine,
Where it in silver bowre does hidden ly
For view of men, and wicked worlds disdaine.

F. Q. 6, *Prologue* 1–3.

Ah! whither doost thou now, thou greater Muse,
Me from these woods and pleasing forrests bring?
And my fraile spirit (that dooth oft refuse
This too high flight, unfit for her weake wing)
Lift up aloft, to tell of heavens king
(Thy soveraine sire) his fortunate successe,
And victory in bigger noates to sing,
Which he obtain'd against that Titanesse,
That him of heavens empire sought to dispossesse?

Yet sith I needs must follow thy behest,
Doe thou my weaker wit with skill inspire,
Fit for this turne; and in my feeble brest
Kindle fresh sparks of that immortall fire
Which learned minds inflameth with desire
Of heavenly things: for who but thou alone,
That art yborne of heaven and heavenly sire,
Can tell things doen in heaven so long ygone,
So farre past memory of man that may be knowne?

F. Q. 7. 7. 1–2.

Yet, O most blessed Spirit, pure lampe of light,
Eternall spring of grace and wisedome trew,
Vouchsafe to shed into my barren spright
Some little drop of thy celestiall dew,
That may my rymes with sweet infuse embrew,
And give me words equall unto my thought,
To tell the marveiles by thy mercie wrought.

3 *Hymne* 43–49.

See also Love as the Poet's Inspiration.

LANDSCAPE-GARDENING

To the gay gardins his unstaid desire
Him wholly caried, to refresh his sprights:
There lavish Nature, in her best attire,
Powres forth sweete odors, and alluring sights;
And Arte, with her contending, doth aspire
T'excell the naturall with made delights. *Muiopotmos.* 161.

And over him, Art, stryving to compayre
With Nature, did an arber greene dispred,
Framed of wanton yvie, flouring fayre,
Through which the fragrant eglantine did spred
His prickling armes, entrayld with roses red,
Which daintie odours round about them threw;
And all within with flowres was garnished,
That, when myld Zephyrus emongst them blew,
Did breath out bounteous smels, and painted colors shew.
F. Q. 2. 5. 29.

It was a chosen plott of fertile land,
Emongst wide waves sett, like a litle nest,
As if it had by Nature's cunning hand
Bene choycely picked out from all the rest,
And laid forth for ensample of the best.
F. Q. 2. 6. 12.

Thence passing forth, they shortly doe arryve
Whereas the Bowre of Blisse was situate;
A place pickt out by choyce of best alyve,
That Natures worke by art can imitate:
In which what ever in this worldly state
Is sweete, and pleasing unto living sense,
Or that may dayntiest fantasy aggrate,
Was poured forth with plentifull dispense,
And made there to abound with lavish affluence.
F. Q. 2. 12. 42.

Thus being entred, they behold arownd
A large and spacious plaine, on every side,
Strowed with pleasauns, whose fayre grassy grownd
Mantled with greene, and goodly beautifide
With all the ornaments of Floraes pride,
Wherewith her mother Art, as halfe in scorne
Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride
Did decke her, and too lavishly adorne,
When forth from virgin bowre she comes in th' early morne.
F. Q. 2. 12. 50.

There the most daintie paradise on ground
It selfe doth offer to his sober eye,
In which all pleasures plenteously abownd,
And none doe others happinesse envye:
The painted flowres, the trees upshooting hye,
The dales for shade, the hilles for breathing space,
The trembling groves, the christall running by;
And that which all faire workes doth most aggrace,
The art, which all that wrought, appeared in no place.

One would have thought (so cunningly the rude
And scorned partes were mingled with the fine,)
That Nature had for wantonnesse ensude
Art, and that Art at Nature did repine;
So striving each th' other to undermine,
Each did the others worke more beautify;
So diff'ring both in willes agreed in fine:
So all agreed through sweete diversity,
This gardin to adorne with all variety.

And in the midst of all a fountaine stood,
Of richest substance that on earth might bee,
So pure and shiny that the silver flood
Through every channell running one might see:
Most goodly it with curious ymageree
Was overwrought, and shapes of naked boyes,
Of which some seemd with lively jollite
To fly about playing their wanton toyes,
Whylest others did them selves embay in liquid joyes.

And over all, of purest gold was spred
A trayle of yvie in his native hew:
For the rich metall was so coloured,
That wight, who did not well avis'd it vew,
Would surely deeme it to bee yvie trew:
Low his lascivious armes adown did creepe,
That themselves dipping in the silver dew,
Their fleecy flowres they tenderly did steepe,
Which drops of christall seemd for wantonnes to weep.

Infinit streames continually did well
Out of this fountaine, sweet and faire to see,
The which into an ample laver fell,
And shortly grew to so great quantitie,
That like a litle lake it seemd to bee;
Whose depth exceeded not three cubits hight,
That through the waves one might the botom see,
All pav'd beneath with jaspar shining bright,
That seemd the fountaine in that sea did sayle upright.

And all the margent round about was sett
With shady laurell trees, thence to defend
The sunny beames, which on the billowes bett,
And those which therein bathed mote offend.
F. Q. 2. 12. 58–63.

'Thus having past that perill, I was come
Within the compasse of that islands space;
The which did seeme, unto my simple doome,
The onely pleasant and delightfull place
That ever troden was of footings trace.
For all that Nature by her mother wit
Could frame in earth, and forme of substance base,
Was there, and all that Nature did omit,
Art, playing second Natures part, supplyed it.

'No tree, that is of count, in greenewood growes,
From lowest juniper to ceder tall,
No flowre in field, that daintie odour throwes,

And deckes his branch with blossomes over all
But there was planted, or grew naturall:
Nor sense of man so coy and curious nice,
But there mote find to please it selfe withall;
Nor hart could wish for any queint device,
But there it present was, and did fraile sense entice.

'In such luxurious plentie of all pleasure,
It seem'd a second paradise to ghesse,
So lavishly enricht with Natures threasure,
That if the happie soules, which doe possesse
Th' Elysian fields and live in lasting blesse,
Should happen this with living eye to see,
They soone would loath their lesser happinesse,
And wish to life return'd againe to bee,
That in this joyous place they mote have joyance free.

'Fresh shadowes, fit to shroud from sunny ray;
Faire lawnds, to take the sunne in season dew;
Swete springs, in which a thousand nymphs did play;
Soft rombling brookes, that gentle slomber drew;
High reared mounts, the lands about to vew;
Low looking dales, disloignd from common gaze;
Delightfull bowres, to solace lovers trew;
False labyrinthes, fond runners eyes to daze;
All which by Nature made did Nature selfe amaze.

'And all without were walkes and alleyes dight
With divers trees, enrang'd in even rankes;
And here and there were pleasant arbors pight,
And shadie seates, and sundry flowring bankes,
To sit and rest the walkers wearie shankes.'

F. Q. 4. 10. 21–25.

LOVE AS THE POET'S INSPIRATION

Nor thys, nor that, so muche doeth make me mourne,
But for the ladde whome long I lovd so deare
Nowe loves a lasse that all his love doth scorne;
He, plongd in payne, his tressed locks dooth teare.

Shepheards delights he dooth them all forsweare,
Hys pleasant pipe, whych made us meriment,
He wylfully hath broke, and doth forbeare
His wonted songs, wherein he all outwent.
S. C., April 8–15.

Wil. What the foule evill hath thee so bestadde?
Whilom thou was peregall to the best,
And wont to make the jolly shepheardes gladde
With pyping and dauncing, didst passe the rest.
Per. Ah! Willye, now I have learnd a newe daunce:
My old musick mard by a newe mischaunce.

Wil. Mischiefe mought to that newe mischaunce befall,
That so hath raft us of our meriment!
But reede me, what payne doth thee so appall?
Or lovest thou, or bene thy younglings miswent?
Per. Love hath misled both my younglings and mee:
I pyne for payne, and they my payne to see.
S. C., August 7–18.

Piers. Ah, fon! for love does teach him climbe so hie,
And lyftes him up out of the loathsome myre:
Such immortall mirrhor as he doth admire
Would rayse ones mynd above the starry skie,
And cause a captive corage to aspire;
For lofty love doth loath a lowly eye.

Cud. All otherwise the state of poet stands;
For lordly Love is such a tyranne fell,
That where he rules, all power he doth expell.
The vaunted verse a vacant head demaundes.
S. C., October. 90–99

Love wont to be schoolmaster of my skill,
And the deviceful matter of my song. *Muses* 385–386.

'Shepheard, it seemes that some celestiall rage
Of love,' quoth Cuddy, 'is breath'd into thy brest,

That powreth forth these oracles so sage
Of that high powre, wherewith thou art possest.'
Colin 823–826.

Ah! whither, Love, wilt thou now carrie mee?
What wontlesse fury dost thou now inspire
Into my feeble breast, too full of thee?
Whylest seeking to aslake thy raging fyre,
Thou in me kindlest much more great desyre,
And up aloft above my strength doest rayse
The wondrous matter of my fyre to prayse.
2 *Hymne* 1–7.

Love, lift me up upon thy golden wings,
From this base world unto thy heavens hight,
Where I may see those admirable things
Which there thou workest by thy soveraine might,
Farre above feeble reach of earthly sight,
That I thereof an heavenly hymne may sing,
Unto the God of Love, high heavens king.
3 *Hymne* 1–7.

LOVE POETRY

Now somewhat sing whose endles sovenaunce
Emong the shepeheards swaines may aye remaine,
Whether thee list thy loved lasse advaunce,
Or honor Pan with hymnes of higher vaine.
S. C., November 5–8.

Yet doth his trembling Muse but lowly flie,
As daring not too rashly mount on hight,
And doth her tender plumes as yet but trie
In loves soft laies and looser thoughts delight.
Colin 419–422.

Thy spirit stirs thee highest fame to gain,
And bids the poet breathe a loftier strain

Than can be found in Love, the light and slight,
And yet, alas, love is not always light!

Letter in Latin Verse to Harvey, Grosart 1. 432.

METHOD

Spenser, in collecting material for his *Epithalamion Thamesis*, has recourse to an authority upon the subject which he wishes to treat. He writes:

'I minde shortely, at convenient leysure, to sette forth a booke in this kinde, whyche I entitle *Epithalamion Thamesis*, whyche booke I dare undertake wil be very profitable for the knowledge, and rare for the invention and manner of handling. For in setting forth the marriage of the Thames, I shewe his first beginning, and offspring, and all the countrey that he passeth thorough, and also describe all the rivers throughout Englande, whyche came to this wedding, and their righte names, and right passage, etc. A worke, beleeve me, of much labour: wherein notwithstanding, Master Holinshed hath muche furthered and advantaged me, who therein hath bestowed singular paines, in searching oute their firste heades and sourses, and also in tracing and dogging out all their course, til they fall into the sea.'

Letter to Harvey. April, 1580.

From the following passage we get some notion of Spenser's method of preparing himself to write:

Eudoxus. You doe very boldly, Irenæus, adventure upon the historye of soe auncient times, and leane to confidently unto those Irish Chronicles which are most fabulous and forged, in that out of them you dare take in hand to lay open the originall of such a nation soe antique, as that noe monument remayneth of her beginning and first inhabiting there; specially having bene in those times allwayes without letters, but onely bare traditions of times and remembraunces of *Bardes*, which use to forge and falsifye every thing as they list, to please or displease any man.

Irenaeus. Truly I must confess I doe soe, but yet not soe absolutely as you suppose. I doe herin relye upon those Bards or Irish Chroniclers, though the Irish themselves, through theyr ignoraunce in matters of learning and deepe judgement, doe most constantly beleve and avouch them, but unto them besides I add my owne reading; and out of them both togither, with comparison of times, likewise of manners and customes, affinitye of woordes and names, propertyes of natures and uses, resemblances of rytes and ceremonyes, monumentes of churches and tombes, and many other like circumstaunces, I doe gather a likelihood of trueth; not certaynly affirming any thing, but by conferring of times, languages, monumentes, and such like, I doe hunte out a probabilitye of thinges, which I leave to your judgement to beleve or refuse. Nevertheless there be some very auncient authors which make mention of these thinges, and some moderne, which by comparing them with present times, experience, and theyr owne reason, doe open a windowe of great light unto the rest that is yet unseene; as namely of the older, Caesar, Strabo, Tacitus, Ptolomie, Plinie, Pompeius Mela, and Berosus: of the later, Vincentius, Æneas Silvius, Luddus, Buckhanan, for that he himself, being an Irish Scott or Picte by nation, and being very excellently learned, and industrious to seeke out the trueth of these thinges concerning the originall of his owne people, hath both sett downe the testimonyes of the auncientes truely, and his owne opinion, withall very reasonably, though in some thinges he doth somewhat flatter. Besides, the Bardes and Irish Chroniclers themselves, though throughe desire of pleasing perhaps to much, and throughe ignorance of arte and purer learning, they have clouded the trueth of those times: yet there appeareth amongest them some reliques of the true antiquitye, though disguised, which a well-eyed man may happely discover and find out.

Ireland, p. 625.

See also READING, TRAINING.

METRICAL EXPERIMENT

As for the twoo worthy gentlemen, Master Sidney and Master Dyer, they have me, I thanke them, in some use of familiarity: of whom and to whome what speache passeth for youre credite and estimation I leave your selfe to conceive, having alwayes so well conceived of my unfained affection and zeale towardes you. And nowe they have proclaimed in their ἀρειωπάγῳ a generall surceasing and silence of balde rymers, and also of the verie beste to: in steade whereof, they have, by authoritie of their whole senate, prescribed certaine lawes and rules of quantities of English sillables for English verse: having had thereof already great practise and drawen mee to their faction. . . . But I am, of late, more in love wyth my Englishe versifying than with ryming: whyche I should have done long since, if I would then have followed your councell. . . .

Thus muche was written at Westminster yesternight: but comming this morning, beeying the sixteenth of October, to Mystresse Kerkes, to have it delivered to the carrier, I receyved youre letter, sente me the last weeke: whereby I perceive you otherwhiles continue your old exercise of versifying in English: whych glorie I had now thought shoulde have bene onely ours heere at London and the court.

Truste me, your verses I like passingly well, and envye your hidden paines in this kinde, or rather maligne and grudge at your selfe, that woulde not once imparte so muche to me. But once or twice, you make a breache in Maister Drants rules: *quod tamen condonabimus tanto poètae, tuaeque ipsius maximae in his rebus autoritati.* You shall see, when we meete in London, (whiche when it shall be, certifye us,) howe fast I have followed after you in that course: beware, leaste in time I overtake you. . . . . And nowe requite I you with the like, not with the verye beste, but with the verye shortest, namely with a few *Iambickes.* I dare warrant, they be precisely perfect for the feete (as you can easily judge) and varie not one inch from the rule. I will impart yours to Maister Sidney and Maister Dyer, at my next going to the

courte. I praye you, keepe mine close to your selfe, or your verie entire friendes, Maister Preston, Maister Still, and the reste.

Iambicum Trimetrum.

Unhappie Verse, the witnesse of my unhappie state,
Make thyselfe fluttring wings of thy fast flying thought,
And fly forth unto my love, wheresoever she be:

Whether lying restlesse in heavy bedde, or else
Sitting so cheerelesse at the cheerfull boorde, or else
Playing alone carelesse on hir heavenlie virginals.

If in bed, tell hir, that my eyes can take no reste:
If at boorde, tell hir, that my mouth can eate no meate:
If at hir virginals, tel hir, I can heare no mirth.

Asked why? say: Waking love suffereth no sleepe:
Say, that raging love dothe apall the weake stomacke:
Say, that lamenting love marreth the musicall.

Tell hir, that hir pleasures were wonte to lull me asleepe:
Tell hir, that hir beautie was wonte to feede mine eyes:
Tell hir, that hir sweete tongue was wonte to make me mirth.

Nowe doe I nightly waste, wanting my kindley reste:
Nowe doe I dayly starve, wanting my lively foode:
Nowe doe I alwayes dye, wanting thy timely mirth.

And if I waste, who will bewaile my heavy chaunce?
And if I starve, who will record my cursed end?
And if I dye, who will saye: *This was Immerito?*

Letter to Harvey, October, 1579.

I like your late Englishe hexameters so exceedingly well, that I also enure my penne sometime in that kinde: whyche I fynd, indeede, as I have heard you often defende in worde, neither so harde, nor so harshe, that it will easily and fairely yeelde it selfe to our moother tongue. For the onely or chiefest hardnesse, whych seemeth, is in the accente: whyche some-

time gapeth, and as it were yawneth ilfavouredly, comming shorte of that it should, and sometime exceeding the measure of the number: as in *carpenter*, the middle sillable being used shorte in speache, when it shall be read long in verse, seemeth like a lame gosling, that draweth one legge after hir: and *heaven*, beeing used shorte as one sillable, when it is in verse, stretched out with a *diastole*, is like a lame dogge that holdes up one legge. But it is to be wonne with custome, and rough words must be subdued with use. For why, a Gods name, may not we, as else the Greekes, have the kingdome of oure owne language, and measure our accentes by the sounde, reserving the quantitie to the verse? Loe! here I let you see my olde use of toying in rymes, turned into your artificial straightnesse of verse by this *tetrasticon*. I beseech you tell me your fancie, without parcialitie.

See yee the blindefoulded pretie god, that feathered archer,
Of lovers miseries which maketh his bloodie game?
Wote ye why his moother with a veale hath coovered his face?
Trust me, least he my loove happely chaunce to beholde.

Seeme they comparable to those two which I translated you *ex tempore* in bed, the last time we lay togither in Westminster?

That which I eate, did I joy, and that which I greedily gorged:
As for those many goodly matters leaft I for others.

I would hartily wish, you would either send me the rules and precepts of arte which you observe in quantities, or else followe mine, that Master Philip Sidney gave me, being the very same which Master Drant devised, but enlarged with Master Sidney's own judgement, and augmented with my observations, that we might both accorde and agree in one, leaste we overthrowe one an other, and be overthrowne of the rest. Truste me, you will hardly beleeve what great good liking and estimation Master Dyer had of your *Satyricall Verses*, and I, since the view thereof, having before of my selfe had speciall liking of Englishe versifying, am even nowe aboute to give you some token, what and how well therein I

am able to doe: for to tell you trueth, I minde shortely, at convenient leysure, to sette forth a booke in this kinde, whyche booke I dare undertake wil be very profitable for the knowledge, and rare for the invention and manner of handling. *Letter to Harvey*, April, 1580.

MUSIC

Shee deignes not my good will, but doth reprove,
And of my rurall musick holdeth scorne.
Shepheards devise she hateth as the snake,
And laughes the songes that Colin Clout doth make.
S. C., Januarye 63–66.

Wil. Tell me, Perigot, what shalbe the game,
Wherefore with myne thou dare thy musicke matche?
Or bene thy bagpypes renne farre out of frame?
S. C., August 1–3.

Soone as thou gynst to sette thy notes in frame,
O how the rurall routes to thee doe cleave!
Seemeth thou doest their soule of sense bereave,
All as the shepheard, that did fetch his dame
Frome Plutoes balefull bowre withouten leave:
His musicks might the hellish hound did tame.
S. C., October 25–30.

And if that any buddes of poësie
Yet of the old stocke gan to shoote agayne,
Or it mens follies mote be forst fo fayne,
And rolle with rest in rymes of rybaudrye,
Or, as it sprong, it wither must agayne:
Tom Piper makes us better melodie. *S. C., October* 72–77.

But nowe sike happy cheere is turnd to heavy chaunce,
Such pleasaunce now displast by dolors dint:
All musick sleepes where Death doth leade the daunce,
And shepheards wonted solace is extinct.
S. C., November 103–106.

And for I was in thilke same looser yeares,
* * * * * * * * * * * *
Somedele ybent to song and musicks mirth.
S. C., December 37, 40.

For all their groves, which with the heavenly noyses
Of their sweete instruments were wont to sound,
And th' hollow hills, from which their silver voyces,
Were wont redoubled echoes to rebound,
Did now rebound with nought but rufull cries,
And yelling shrieks throwne up into the skies.

The trembling streames which wont in chanels cleare
To romble gently downe with murmur soft,
And were by them right tunefull taught to beare
A bases part amongst their consorts oft,
Now forst to overflowe with brackish teares,
With troublous noyse did dull their daintie eares.

The joyous nymphes and lightfoote faeries
Which thether came to heare their musick sweet,
And to the measure of their melodies
Did learne to move their nimble shifting feete,
Now hearing them so heavily lament,
Like heavily lamenting from them went. *Muses* 18–35.

Our pleasant groves, which planted were with paines,
That with our musick wont so oft to ring,
And arbors sweet, in which the shepheards swaines,
Were wont so oft their pastoralls to sing,
They have cut downe, and all their pleasaunce mard,
That now no pastorall is to be hard. *Muses* 277–282.

They to the vulgar sort now pipe and sing,
And make them merrie with their fooleries;
They cherelie chaunt and rymes at random fling.
Muses 318–320.

Thus when this courtly gentleman with toyle
Himselfe hath wearied, he doth recoyle
Unto his rest, and there with sweete delight
Of musicks skill revives his toyled spright.
Prosopopoia 753–756.

Best musicke breeds dislike in loathing eare.
F. Q. 1. 8. 44.

And all the while sweete musicke did apply
Her curious skill, the warbling notes to play,
To drive away the dull melancholy;
The whiles one sung a song of love and jollity.

During the which there was an heavenly noise
Heard sownd through all the pallace pleasantly,
Like as it had bene many an angels voice
Singing before th' Eternall Majesty,
In their trinall triplicities on hye;
Yett wist no creature, whence that heavenly sweet
Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly,
Himselfe thereby refte of his sences meet,
And ravished with rare impression in his sprite.
F. Q. 1. 12. 38–39.

And when she spake,
Sweete wordes, like dropping honny, she did shed,
And twixt the perles and rubies softly brake
A silver sound, that heavenly musicke seemd to make.
F. Q. 2. 3. 24.

Therein the mery birdes of every sorte
Chaunted alowd their chearefull harmonee,
And made emongst them selves a sweete consort,
That quickned the dull spright with musickall comfort.
F. Q. 2. 5. 31.

And all the quire of birds did sweetly sing,
And told that gardins pleasures in their caroling.

And she, more sweete then any bird on bough,
Would oftentimes emongst them beare a part,
And strive to passe (as she could well enough)
Their native musicke by her skilful art.

F. Q. 2. 6. 24–25.

Diverse delights they fownd them selves to please;
Some song in sweet consort, some laught for joy.

F. Q. 2. 9. 35.

Fayre Helena, the fairest living wight;
Who in all godly thewes, and goodly praise,
Did far excell, but was most famous hight,
For skil in musicke of all in her daies,
Aswell in curious instruments as cunning laies.

F. Q. 2. 10. 59.

Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that mote delight a daintie eare,
Such as attonce might not on living ground,
Save in this paradise, be heard elswhere:
Right hard it was for wight which did it heare,
To read what manner musicke that mote bee:
For all that pleasing is to living eare
Was there consorted in one harmonee;
Birdes, voices, instruments, windes, waters, all agree.

The joyous birdes, shrouded in chearefull shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempred sweet:
Th' angelicall soft trembling voyces made
To th' instrumentes divine respondence meet:
The silver sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmurs of the waters fall:
The waters fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud unto the wind did call:
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

F. Q. 2. 12. 70–71.

And all the while sweet musicke did divide
Her looser notes with Lydian harmony;
And all the while sweet birdes thereto applide
Their daintie layes and dulcet melody,
Ay caroling of love and jollity,
That wonder was to heare their trim consort.
F. Q. 3. 1. 40.

Dischord ofte in musick makes the sweeter lay.
F. Q. 3. 2. 15.

The whiles a most delitious harmony
In full straunge notes was sweetly heard to sound,
That the rare sweetnesse of the melody
The feeble sences wholy did confound,
And the frayle soule in deepe delight nigh drownd:
And when it ceast, shrill trompets lowd did bray,
That their report did far away rebound,
And when they ceast, it gan againe to play,
The whiles the maskers marched forth in trim aray.
F. Q. 3. 12. 6.

There he did find in her delitious boure
The faire Pœana playing on a rote,
Complayning of her cruell paramoure,
And singing all her sorrow to the note,
As she had learned readily by rote;
That with the sweetnesse of her rare delight
The Prince halfe rapt, began on her to dote. *F. Q.* 4. 9. 6.

Then was there heard a most celestiall sound
Of dainty musicke, which did next ensew
Before the spouse: that was Arion crownd;
Who, playing on his harpe, unto him drew
The eares and hearts of all that goodly crew,
That even yet the dolphin, which him bore
Through the Agaean seas from pirates vew,
Stood still by him astonisht at his lore,
And all the raging seas for joy forgot to rore.
F. Q. 4. 11. 23.

Then all the people, which beheld that day,
Gan shout aloud, that unto heaven it rong;
And all the damzels of that towne in ray
Came dauncing forth, and joyous carrols song.
F. Q. 5. 11. 34.

Phoebus self, that god of poets hight,
They say did sing the spousall hymne full cleere,
That all the gods were ravisht with delight
Of his celestiall song, and musicks wondrous might.
F. Q. 7. 7. 12.

But who so else in pleasure findeth sense,
Or in this wretched life dooth take delight,
Let him be banisht farre away from hence:
Ne let the Sacred Sisters here be hight,
Though they of sorrowe heavilie can sing;
For even their heavie song would breede delight:
But here no tunes, save sobs and grones shall ring.

In stead of them and their sweet harmonie,
Let those three Fatall Sisters, whose sad hands
Doo weave the direfull threds of destinie,
* * * * * * * * * * *
Approach hereto. *Daph.* 8–17, 19.

For he could pipe, and daunce, and caroll sweet,
Emongst the shepheards in their shearing feast;
As somers larke that with her song doth greet
The dawning day forth coming from the East.
And layes of love he also could compose:
Thrise happie she whom he to praise did chose.
Astro. 31–36.

Arion, when, through tempests cruel wracke,
He forth was thrown into the greedy seas,
Through the sweet musick which his harp did make
Allur'd a dolphin him from death to ease.

But my rude musick, which was wont to please
Some dainty eares, cannot, with any skill,
The dreadfull tempest of her wrath appease,
Nor move the dolphin from her stubborne will.

Amor. 38. 1—8.

When those renoumed noble peres of Greece
Through stubborn pride amongst themselves did jar,
Forgetfull of the famous golden fleece,
Then Orpheus with his harp theyr strife did bar.

Amor. 44. 1—4.

Harke now the minstrels gin to shrill aloud
Their merry musick that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling croud,
That well agree withouten breach or jar,
But most of all the damzels doe delite,
When they their tymbrels smyte,
And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,
That all the sences they doe ravish quite.

Epithal. 129—136.

And let the roring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes,
The whiles with hollow throates
The choristers the joyous antheme sing,
That al the woods may answere, and their echo ring.

Epithal. 218—222.

THE BROAD CONCEPTION OF NATURE

Through knowledge we behold the worlds creation,
How in his cradle first he fostred was;
And judge of Natures cunning operation,
How things she formed of a formelesse mas.

Muses 499—502,

What more felicitie can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with libertie,
And to be lord of all the workes of Nature,
To raine in th' aire from earth to highest skie,
To feed on flowres and weeds of glorious feature,
To take what ever thing doth please the eie?

Muiopotmos 209–214.

It fortuned (as heavens had behight)
That in this gardin, where yong Clarion
Was wont to solace him, a wicked wight,
The foe of faire things, th' author of confusion,
The shame of Nature, the bondslave of spight,
Had lately built his hateful mansion.

Muiopotmos 241–246

Most ugly shapes and horrible aspects,
Such as Dame Nature selfe mote feare to see,
Or shame that ever should so fowle defects
From her most cunning hand escaped bee.

F. Q. 2. 12. 23.

And thither also came all other creatures,
What-ever life or motion doe retaine,
According to their sundry kinds of features;
That Arlo scarsly could them all containe;
So full they filled every hill and plaine:
And had not Natures sergeant (that is Order)
Them well disposed by his busie paine,
And raunged farre abroad in every border,
They would have caused much confusion and disorder.

F. Q. 7. 7. 4. (Cf. above, *Muiopotmos* 241.)

This great grandmother of all creatures bred,
Great Nature, ever young yet full of eld,
Still mooving, yet unmoved from her sted,
Unseene of any yet of all beheld. *F. Q.* 7. 7. 13.

NEEDLEWORK, TAPESTRY, ETC.

The cause why he this flie so maliced
Was (as in stories it is written found)
For that his mother which him bore and bred,
The most fine-fingred workwoman on ground,
Arachne, by his meanes was vanquished
Of Pallas, and in her owne skill confound,
When she with her for excellence contended,
That wrought her shame, and sorrow never ended.

For the Tritonian goddesse, having hard
Her blazed fame, which all the world had fil'd,
Came downe to prove the truth, and dew reward
For her prais-worthie workmanship to yeild:
But the presumptuous damzel rashly dar'd
The goddesse selfe to chalenge to the field,
And to compare with her in curious skill
Of workes with loome, with needle, and with quill.

Minerva did the chalenge not refuse,
But deign'd with her the paragon to make:
So to their worke they sit, and each doth chuse
What storie she will for her tapet take,
Arachne figur'd how Jove did abuse
Europa like a bull, and on his backe
Her through the sea did beare; so lively seene,
That it true sea and true bull ye would weene.

She seem'd still backe unto the land to looke,
And her play-fellowes aide to call, and feare
The dashing of the waves, that up she tooke
Her daintie feete, and garments gathered neare:
But (Lord!) how she in everie member shooke,
When as the land she saw no more appeare,
But a wilde wildernes of waters deepe!
Then gan she greatly to lament and weepe.

Before the bull she pictur'd winged Love,
With his yong brother Sport, light fluttering
Upon the waves, as each had been a dove;
The one his bowe and shafts, the other spring
A burning teade about his head did move,
As in their syres new love both triumphing:
And many Nymphes about them flocking round,
And manie Tritons, which their hornes did sound.

And round about, her worke she did empale
With a faire border wrought of sundrie flowres,
Enwoven with an yvie winding trayle:
A goodly worke, full fit for kingly bowres,
Such as Dame Pallas, such as Envie pale,
That al good things with venemous tooth devowres,
Could not accuse. Then gan the goddesse bright
Her selfe likewise unto her worke to dight.

She made the storie of the olde debate,
Which she with Neptune did for Athens trie:
Twelve gods doo sit around in royall state,
And Jove in midst with awfull majestie,
To judge the strife betweene them stirred late:
Each of the gods by his like visnomie
Eathe to be knowen: but Jove above them all,
By his great lookes and power imperiall.

Before them stands the god of seas in place,
Clayming that sea-coast citie as his right,
And strikes the rockes with his three-forked mace;
Whenceforth issues a warlike steed in sight,
The signe by which he chalengeth the place:
That all the gods, which saw his wondrous might,
Did surely deeme the victorie his due:
But seldome seene, forejudgement proveth true.

Then to her selfe she gives her Aegide shield,
And steelhed speare, and morion on her hedd,
Such as she oft is seene in warlicke field:
Then sets she forth, how with her weapon dredd

She smote the ground, the which streight foorth did yield
A fruitful olyve tree, with berries spredd,
That all the gods admir'd; then all the storie
She compast with a wreathe of olyves hoarie.

Emongst these leaves she made a butterflie,
With excellent device and wondrous slight,
Fluttring among the olives wantonly,
That seem'd to live, so like it was in sight:
The velvet nap which on his wings doth lie,
The silken downe with which his backe is dight,
His broad outstretched hornes, his hayrie thies,
His glorious colours, and his glistering eies.

Which when Arachne saw, so overlaid
And mastered with workmanship so rare,
She stood astonied long, ne ought gainesaid,
And with fast fixed eyes on her did stare,
And by her silence, signe of one dismaid,
The victorie did yeeld her as her share.

Muiopotmos 257–342.

The wals were round about appareiled
With costly clothes of Arras and of Toure,
In which with cunning hand was pourtrahed
The love of Venus and her paramoure,
The fayre Adonis, turned to a flowre,
A worke of rare device and wondrous wit.

Stanzas 35, 36, 37, and 38 continue the description of the 'costly clothes'; the description ends as follows:

Him to a dainty flowre she did transmew,
Which in that cloth was wrought, as if lively grew.

F. Q. 3. 1. 34.

For round about, the walls yclothed were
With goodly arras of great majesty,
Woven with gold and silke so close and nere,
That the rich metall lurked privily,

As faining to be hidd from envious eye;
Yet here, and there, and every where unwares
It shewd it selfe, and shone unwillingly;
Like a discolourd snake, whose hidden snares
Through the greene gras his long bright burnisht back declares.

And in those tapets weren fashioned
Many faire poutraicts, and many a faire feate;
And all of love, and al of lusty-hed,
As seemed by their semblaunt, did entreat;
And eke all Cupids warres they did repeate,
And cruell battailes, which he whilome fought
Gainst all the gods, to make his empire great;
Besides the huge massacres which he wrought
On mighty kings and kesars, into thraldome brought.

Therein was writt, how often thondring Jove
Had felt the point of his hart percing dart,
And leaving heavens kingdome, here did rove
In straunge disguize, to slake his scalding smart;
Now like a ram, faire Helle to pervart,
Now like a bull, Europa to withdraw:
Ah! how the fearefull ladies tender hart
Did lively seeme to tremble, when she saw
The huge seas under her t'obay her servaunts law!

Soone after that, into a golden showre
Him selfe he chaung'd faire Danaë to vew,
And through the roofe of her strong brasen towre
Did raine into her lap an hony dew,
The whiles her foolish garde, that litle knew
Of such deceipt, kept th' yron dore fast bard,
And watcht, that none should enter nor issew;
Vaine was the watch, and bootlesse all the ward,
Whenas the god to golden hew him selfe transfard.

Then was he turnd into a snowy swan,
To win faire Leda to his lovely trade:

O wondrous skill and sweet wit of the man,
That her in daffadillies sleeping made,
From scorching heat her daintie limbes to shade:
Whiles the proud bird, ruffing his fethers wyde
And brushing his faire brest, did her invade!
Shee slept, yet twixt her eielids closely spyde
How towards her he rusht, and smiled at his pryde.
F. Q. 3. 11. 28–32.

The description of the arras continues throughout stanzas 33—46.

ORNAMENTS OF POETRY

A doleful case desires a doleful song,
Without vaine art or curious complements,
And squallid fortune into basenes flong,
Doth scorne the pride of wonted ornaments.
Muses 541–544.

But these Irish Bards are for the most part of another mynd, and soe farr from instructing yong men in morall discipline, that they themselves doe more desarve to be sharply disciplined; for they seldome use to choose unto themselves the doinges of good men for the ornamentes of theyr poems, but whomsoever they find to be most licentious of life.
Ireland, p. 641.

PAINTING

Lastly his shinie wings, as silver bright,
Painted with thousand colours, passing farre
All painters skill, he did about him dight:
Not halfe so manie sundrie colours arre
In Iris bowe, ne heaven doth shine so bright.
Muiopotmos 88–89.

The Chian peincter, when he was requirde
To pourtraict Venus in her perfect hew,

To make his worke more absolute, desird
Of all the fairest maides to have the vew.
Much more me needs, to draw the semblant trew
Of Beauties Queene, the worlds sole wonderment,
To sharpe my sence with sundry beauties vew,
And steale from each some part of ornament.
17 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.* (Cf. below, *F. Q.* 4. 5. 11.)

His chamber was dispainted all with in
With sondry colours, in the which were writ
Infinite shapes of thinges dispersed thin;
Some such as in the world were never yit,
Ne can devized be of mortall wit;
Some daily seene, and knowen by their names,
Such as in idle fantasies doe flit:
Infernall hags, centaurs, feendes, hippodames,
Apes, lyons, aegles, owles, fooles, lovers, children, dames.
* * * * * * * * * * * *
Whom Alma having shewed to her guestes,
Thence brought them to the second roome, whose wals
Were painted faere with memorable gestes
Of famous wisards, and with picturals
Of magistrates, of courts, of tribunals,
Of commen wealthes, of states, of pollicy,
Of lawes, of judgementes, and of decretals;
All artes, all science, all philosophy,
And all that in the world was ay thought wittily.
F. Q. 2. 9. 50, 53.

It falls me here to write of Chastity,
That fayrest vertue, far above the rest;
For which what needes me fetch from Faery
Forreine ensamples, it to have exprest?
Sith it is shrined in my Soveraines brest,
And formd so lively in each perfect part,
That to all ladies, which have it profest,
Neede but behold the poutraict of her hart,
If pourtrayd it might bee by any living art.

But living art may not least part expresse,
Nor life-resembling pencill it can paynt,
All were it Zeuxis or Praxiteles:
His daedale hand would faile, and greatly faynt,
And her perfections with his error taynt:
Ne poets witt, that passeth painter farre
In picturing the parts of beauty daynt,
So hard a workemanship adventure darre,
For fear through want of words her excellence to marre.

F. Q. 3. *Prologue* 1–2.

Then did Sir Ferramont unto them shew
His Lucida, that was full faire and sheene:
And after these an hundred ladies moe
Appear'd in place, the which each other did outgoe.

All which who so dare thinke for to enchace,
Him needeth sure a golden pen, I weene,
To tell the feature of each goodly face.
For since the day that they created beene,
So many heavenly faces were not seene
Assembled in one place: ne he that thought
For Chian folke to pourtraict beauties queene,
By view of all the fairest to him brought,
So many faire did see, as here he might have sought.

F. Q. 4. 5. 11–12 (Cf. above, 17 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.*)

The glorious pourtraict of that angels face,
Made to amaze weake mens confused skil,
And this worlds worthlesse glory to embase,
What pen, what pencill, can expresse her fill?
For though he colours could devize at will,
And eke his learned hand at pleasure guide,
Least, trembling, it his workmanship should spill,
Yet many wondrous things there are beside.
The sweet eye-glaunces, that like arrowes glide,
The charming smiles, that rob sence from the hart,
The lovely pleasance, and the lofty pride,
Cannot expressed be by any art.

A greater craftesmans hand thereto doth neede,
That can expresse the life of things indeed. *Amor.* 17

Ne could that painter (had he lived yet)
Which pictured Venus with so curious quill
That all posteritie admyred it,
Have purtrayd this, for all his maistring skill.
4 *Hymne* 211–214.

PATRIOTISM

At last, quite ravisht with delight, to heare
The royall ofspring of his native land,
Cryde out: 'Deare countrey! O how dearely deare
Ought thy remembraunce and perpetual band
Be to thy foster childe, that from thy hand
Did commun breath and nouriture receave!
How brutish is it not to understand
How much to her we owe, that all us gave,
That gave unto us all, what ever good we have!'
F. Q. 2. 10. 69.

For nothing may impresse so deare constraint,
As countries cause and commune foes disdayne.
F. Q. 3. 9. 40.

INFLUENCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF PLATONIC IDEAS

That peerelesse paterne of Dame Natures pride,
And heavenly image of perfection [Britomart].
F. Q. 4. 6. 24.

Leave, lady, in your glasse of christall clene
Your goodly selfe for evermore to vew,
And in my selfe, my inward selfe I meane,
Most lively lyke behold your semblant trew.

Within my hart, though hardly it can shew
Thing so divine to vew of earthly eye,
The fayre idea of your celestiall hew
And every part remaines immortally:
And were it not that through your cruelty
With sorrow dimmed and deformd it were,
The goodly image of your visnomy
Clearer than christall would therein appere.
But if your selfe in me ye playne will see,
Remove the cause by which your fayre beames darkned be.
Amor. 45.

Since I have lackt the comfort of that light,
The which was wont to lead my thoughts astray,
I wander as in darknesse of the night,
Affrayd of every dangers least dismay.
Ne ought I see, though in the clearest day,
When others gaze upon theyr shadowes vayne,
But th' onely image of that heavenly ray,
Whereof some glance doth in mine eie remayne.
Of which beholding the idea playne,
Through contemplation of my purest part,
With light thereof I doe my selfe sustayne,
And thereon feed my love-affamisht hart.
But with such brightnesse whylest I fill my mind,
I starve my body, and mine eyes doe blynd. *Amor.* 87.

Therefore of clay, base, vile, and next to nought,
Yet form'd by wondrous skill, and by his might,
According to an heavenly patterne wrought,
Which he had fashioned in his wise foresight,
He man did make, and breathd a living spright
Into his face most beautifull and fayre,
Endewd with wisedomes riches, heavenly, rare.
3 *Hymne* 104–110.

See also Form (1).

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE POET

Spenser complains of the lack of pecuniary reward for the poet at court, but, through Piers, reveals a nobler expectation.

Piers. Cuddie, the prayse is better then the price,
The glory eke much greater then the gayne:
O what an honor is it, to restraine
The lust of lawlesse youth with good advice,
Or pricke them forth with pleasaunce of thy vaine,
Whereto thou list their trayned willes entice!
S. C., October 19–24.

Ne wont with crabbed Care the Muses dwell.
S. C., October 101.

The poet is ranked with heroes:

And now thee worship, mongst that blessed throng
Of heavenlie poets and heroes strong. *R. of T.* 340–341.

Such happiness have they that doo embrace
The precepts of my heavenlie discipline,
How ever yet they mee despise and spight,
I feede on sweet contentment of my thought,
And please my selfe with mine own selfe-delight,
In contemplation of things heavenlie wrought:
So loathing earth, I looke up to the sky,
And being driven hence, I thether fly. *Muses* 517–522.

The poet's power to imagine and to discover is implied in the following passage:

Right well I wote, most mighty Soveraine,
That all this famous antique history
Of some th' aboundance of an ydle braine
Will judged be, and painted forgery,

Rather then matter of just memory;
Sith none that breatheth living aire does know,
Where is that happy land of Faery,
Which I so much doe vaunt, yet no where show,
But vouch antiquities, which no body can know.

But let that man with better sence advize,
That of the world least part to us is red:
And daily how through hardy enterprize
Many great regions are discovered,
Which to late age were never mentioned.
Who ever heard of th' Indian Peru?
Or who in venturous vessell measured
The Amazons huge river, now found trew?
Or fruitfullest Virginia who did ever vew?

Yet all these were when no man did them know,
Yet have from wisest ages hidden beene;
And later times thinges more unknowne shall show.
Why then should witlesse man so much misweene,
That nothing is, but that which he hath seene?
What if within the moones fayre shining spheare,
What if in every other starre unseene,
Of other worldes he happily should heare?
He wonder would much more; yet such to some appeare.

Of Faery Lond yet if he more inquyre,
By certain signes, here sett in sondrie place,
He may it fynd; ne let him then admyre,
But yield his sence to bee too blunt and bace,
That no'te without an hound fine footing trace.
And thou, O fayrest Princesse under sky,
In this fayre mirrhour maist behold thy face,
And thine owne realmes in lond of Faery,
And in this antique ymage thy great auncestry.

F. Q. 2, *Prologue* 1–4.

There as they entred at the scriene, they saw
Some one, whose tongue was for his trespasse vyle

Nayld to a post, adjudged so by law:
For that therewith he falsely did revyle
And foule blaspheme that queene for forged guyle,
Both with bold speaches which he blazed had,
And with lewd poems which he did compyle;
For the bold title of a poet bad
He on himselfe had ta'en, and rayling rymes had sprad.

Thus there he stood, whylest high over his head
There written was the purport of his sin,
In cyphers strange, that few could rightly read,
Bonfont: but *Bon*, that once had written bin,
Was raced out, and *Mal* was now put in:
So now *Malfont* was plainely to be red;
Eyther for th' evill he did therein,
Or that he likened was to a welhed
Of evill words, and wicked sclaunders by him shed.
F. Q. 5. 9. 25–26.

'Cause have I none,' quoth he, 'of cancred will
To quite them ill, that me demeand so well:
But selfe-regard of private good or ill
Moves me of each, so as I found, to tell,
And eke to warne yong shepheards wandring wit,
Which, through report of that lives painted blisse,
Abandon quiet home, to seeke for it,
And leave their lambes to losse, misled amisse.
For, sooth to say, it is no sort of life
For shepheard fit to lead in that same place,
Where each one seeks with malice and with strife,
To thrust downe other into foule disgrace,
Himselfe to raise; and he doth soonest rise
That best can handle his deceitfull wit
In subtil shifts, and finest sleights devise,
Either by slaundring his well deemed name,
Through leasings lewd and fained forgerie
Or else by breeding him some blot of blame,
By creeping close into his secrecie;

To which him needs a guileful hollow hart,
Masked with faire dissembling curtesie,
A filed toung furnisht with tearmes of art,
No art of schoole, but courtiers schoolery.
For arts of schoole have there small countenance,
Counted but toyes to busie ydle braines,
And there professours find small maintenance,
But to be instruments of others gaines.
Ne is there place for any gentle wit,
Unlesse to please it selfe it can applie:
But shouldred is, or out of doore quite shit,
As base, or blunt, unmeet for melodie.
For each mans worth is measured by his weed,
As harts by hornes, or asses by their eares:
Yet asses been not all whose eares exceed,
Nor yet all harts, that hornes the highest beares.
For highest lookes have not the highest mynd,
Nor haughtie words most full of highest thoughts:
But are like bladders blowen up with wynd,
That being prickt do vanish into noughts.
Even such is all their vaunted vanitie,
Nought else but smoke, that fumeth soone away;
Such is their glorie that in simple eie
Seeme greatest, when their garments are most gay.
So they themselves for praise of fooles do sell,
And all their wealth for painting on a wall;
With price whereof they buy a golden bell,
And purchase highest rowmes in bowre and hall:
Whiles single Truth and simple Honestie
Do wander up and downe despys'd of all;
Their plaine attire such glorious gallantry
Disdaines so much, that none them in doth call.

Colin 679–729.

Young Astrophel, the pride of shepheards praise,
Young Astrophel, the rusticke lasses love,
Far passing all the pastors of his daies,
In all that seemly shepheard might behove:

In one thing onely fayling of the best,
That he was not so happie as the rest. *Astro.* 7–12.

Harvey, the happy above happiest men
I read: that, sitting like a looker-on
Of this worldes stage, doest note with critique pen
The sharpe dislikes of each condition:
And, as one carelesse of suspition,
Ne fawnest for the favour of the great;
Ne fearest foolish reprehension
Of faulty men, which daunger to thee threat;
But freely doest of what thee list entreat,
Like a great lord of peerelesse liberty;
Lifting the good up to high Honours seat,
And the evill damning evermore to dy.
For life and death is in thy doomeful writing:
So thy renowme lives ever by endighting.

Sonnet to Harvey.

See also Training of the Poet.

POETIC ECSTACY

Who ever casts to compasse weightye prise,
And thinks to throwe out thondring words of threate,
Let powre in lavish cups and thriftie bitts of meate;
For Bacchus fruite is frend to Phoebus wise,
And when with wine the braine begins to sweate,
The nombers flowe as fast as spring doth ryse.

Thou kenst not, Percie, howe the ryme should rage.
O if my temples were distained with wine,
And girt in girlonds of wild yvie twine,
How I could reare the Muse on stately stage,
And teach her tread aloft in buskin fine,
With queint Bellona in her equipage!

C. S., October. 103–114.

'Colin,' said Cuddy then, 'thou hast forgot
Thy selfe, me seemes, too much to mount so hie.
Such loftie flight base shepheard seemeth not,
From flocks and fields to angels and to skie.'
'True,' answered he, 'but her great excellence
Lifts me above the measure of my might:
That, being fild with furious insolence,
I feele my selfe like one yrapt in spright.'

Colin 616–623.

Her worth is written with a golden quill:
That me with heavenly fury doth inspire,
And my glad mouth with her sweet prayses fill.

Amor. 84. 10–12.

Rapt with the rage of mine own ravisht thought,
Through contemplation of those goodly sights,
And glorious images in heaven wrought,
Whose wondrous beauty, breathing sweet delights,
Do kindle love in high conceipted sprights,
I faine to tell the things that I behold,
But feele my wits to faile, and tongue to fold.

4 *Hymne* 1–7.

See also Inspiration.

POETIC IMAGING AND REFLECTION

One day, whiles that my daylie cares did sleepe,
My spirit, shaking off her earthly prison,
Began to enter into meditation deepe
Of things exceeding reach of common reason;
Such as this age, in which all good is geason,
And all that humble is and meane debaced,
Hath brought forth in her last declining season.
Griefe of good mindes, to see goodnesse disgraced,
On which when as my thought was throghly placed,
Unto my eyes strange showes presented were,

Picturing that which I in minde embraced,
That yet those sights empassion me full nere.
Such as they were (faire Ladie) take in worth,
That when time serves, may bring things better forth.
V. of World's V. 1–14.

Lackyng my love, I go from place to place,
Lyke a young fawne that late has lost the hynd,
And seeke each where, where last I saw her face,
Whose ymage yet I carry fresh in mynd.
I seeke the fields with her late footing synd,
I seeke her bowre with her late presence deckt,
Yet nor in field nor bowre I her can fynd;
Yet field and bowre are full of her aspect.
But when myne eyes I thereunto direct,
They ydly back returne to me agayne,
And when I hope to see theyr trew object,
I fynd my selfe but fed with fancies vayne.
Ceasse then, myne eyes, to seeke her selfe to see,
And let my thoughts behold her selfe in mee. *Amor.* 78.

See also Form (1).

POETIC TRUTH

The Bards and Irish Chroniclers themselves, though throughe desire of pleasing perhaps to much, and through ignorance of arte and purer learning, they have clouded the trueth of those times; yett there appeareth amongest them some reliques of the true antiquitye, though disguised, which a well-eyed man may happely discover and find out.
Ireland, p. 626.

The Irish Chronicles (as I sayd unto you) being made by unlearned men, and writing thinges according to the appearaunce of the trueth which they conceaved, doe err in the circumstances, not in the matter. For al that came out of Spayne (they being noe diligent searchers into the differences

of nations) supposed them to be Spanyards, and soe called them; but the groundwoorke there of is nevertheless, as I sayd, true and certayne, however they through ignoraunce disguise the same, or through their owne vanitye (while they would not seeme to be ignoraunt), doe therupon build and enlarge many forged historyes of theyr owne antiquitye, which they deliver to fooles, and make them beleve them for trewe: as for example, that first of one Gathelus the sonn of Cecrops or Argos, who having marryed the King of Ægipts daughter, thence sayled with her into Spayne, and there inhabited: Then that of Nemed and his fowre sonnes, who coming out of Scythia peopled Ireland, and inhabited it with his sonnes two hundred and fiftye yeares untill he was overcome of the Gyauntes dwelling then in Ireland, and at last quite banished and rooted out, after whom two hundred yeares, the sonnes of one Dela, being Scythians, arrived there agayne, and possessed the whole land, of which the youngest, called Slevius, in the end made himself monarch. Lastly, of the fowre sonnes of Mylesius, King of Spayne, which conquered that land from the Scythians, and inhabited it with Spaniards, and called it of the name of the youngest, Hiberus, Hybernia: all which are in very trueth fables, and very Mylesian lyes (as the Latine proverbe is), for never was there such a King of Spayne called Mylesius, nor any such colonie seated with his sonnes, as they fayne, that can ever be prooved; but yet under these tales ye may in a manner see the trueth lurke.

Ireland, p. 627.

POWER OF KNOWLEDGE, LIBERAL ARTS, ETC.

The seven fold yron gates of grislie Hell,
And horrid house of sad Proserpina,
They [the Muses] able are with powere of mightie spell
To breake, and thence the soules to bring awaie
Out of dread darknesse to eternall day,
And them immortall make, which els would die
In foul forgetfulnesse, and nameless lie. *R. of T.* 372–377.

Image of hellish horrour, Ignorance. *Muses* 259.

And whenso love of letters did inspire
Their gentle wits, and kindly wise desire,
That chieflie doth each noble minde adorne,
Then he would scoffe at learning. *Prosopopoia* 829–832.

Whose footsteps Bladud following, in artes
Exceld at Athens all the learned preace,
From whence he brought them to these salvage parts,
And with sweet science mollifide their stubborne harts.
F. Q. 2. 10. 25.

Firebrand of hell, first tynd in Phlegeton
By thousand furies, and from thence out throwen
Into this world, to worke confusion
And set it all on fire by force unknowen,
Is wicked discord, whose small sparkes once blowen
None but a god or godlike man can slake;
Such as was Orpheus, that when strife was growen
Amongst those famous ympes of Greece did take
His silver harpe in hand, and shortly friends them make;

Or such as that celestiall Psalmist was,
That when the wicked feend his lord tormented,
With heavenly notes, that did all other pas,
The outrage of his furious fit relented.
Such musicke is wise words with time concented,
To moderate stiffe mindes, disposed to strive:
Such as that prudent Romane well invented,
What time his people into partes did rive,
Them reconcyld againe, and to their homes did drive.
F. Q. 4. 2. 1–2.

When those renoumed noble peres of Greece
Thrugh stubborn pride amongst themselves did jar,
Forgetfull of the famous golden fleece,
Then Orpheus with his harp theyr strife did bar.
Amor. 44. 1–4.

Eudox. 'Surely I suppose this but a vayne conceit of simple men, which judge thinges by theyre effectes, and not by theyre causes; for I will rather thinke the cause of this evill, which hangeth upon that countrey, to proceede rather of the unsoundness of the counsells, and plottes, which you say have beene oftentimes layed for the reformation, or of fayntness in following and effecting the same, then of any such fatall course or appoyntment of God, as you misdeeme: but it is the manner of men, that when they are fallen into any absurditye, or theyr actions succeede not as they would, they are ready allwayes to impute the blame therof unto the heavens, soe to excuse their owne follyes and imperfectiones. Soe have I allso heard it often wished, (even of some whose greate wisedomes, in my opinion, should seeme to judge more soundly of soe weighty a consideration) that all that land were a sea-poole: which kind of speach is the manner rather of desperat men farr driven, to wishe the utter ruine of that they cannot redress, then of grave counsellors, which ought to thinke nothing soe hard but that, through wysedome, it may be mastred and subdued; since the Poet sayeth, that 'the wyse man shall rule even over the starres,' much more over the earth; for were it not the part of a desperat phisition to wish his diseased patient dead, rather then to applye the best endevours of his skill for his recovery. *Ireland*, p. 609.

For those Lawes of Lacedaemon were devised by Lycurgus, as most proper and best agreing with that people, whom he knewe to be enclyned alltogither to warres, and therefore wholly trayned them up even from theyr craddels in armes and military exercises, cleane contrarye to the institution of Solon, who, in his lawes to the Atheniens, laboured by all meanes to temper theyr warlick couradge with sweete delight of learning and sciences, soe that as much as the one excelled in armes, the other exceeded in knowledge. The like regard and moderation ought to be had in tempering and managing of this stubborne nation of the Irish, to bring them from that delight of licentious barbarisme unto the love of goodness and civilitye.

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Eudox. I can not see how that may better be then by the discipline of the lawes of England: for the English were, at the first, as stout and warrelike a people as ever were the Irish, and yet ye see are now brought unto that civilitye, that no nation in the world excelleth them in all goodly conversation, and all the studyes of knowledge and humanitye.

Ireland, p. 613.

For where ye say that the Irish have allwayes bene without letters, ye are therin much deceaved, for it is certayne, that Ireland hath had the use of letters very aunciently, and long before England.

Eudox. Is it possible? Howe comes it then that they are soe barbarous still and soe unlearned, being so old schollers? for learning (as the Poet sayth) '*Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*'

Ireland, p. 626.

Iren. The next thing that I will doe shalbe to appointe to everye one, that is not able to live of his freeholde, a certayne trade of life, to which he shall finde himselfe fittest, and shalbe thought ablest, the which trade he shalbe bounde to followe, and live onely therupon. All trades therfore, it is to be understood, are to be of three kindes, manuall, intellectuall, and mixt. The first contayning all such as needeth exercise of bodylye labour to the perfourmaunce of theyr profession; the other consisting onelye of the exercise of wit and reason; the third sort, partly of bodilye labour, and partly of witt, but depending most of industrye and carefullness. Of the first sorte be all handycraftes and husbandrye labour. Of the second be all sciences, and those which are called the liberall artes. Of the thirde is marchandize and chafferie, that is buying and selling; and without all these three there is noe commonwealth can allmost consist, or at the least be perfect. But that wretched realme of Ireland wanteth the most principall of them, that is, the intellectuall; therfore in seeking to reforme her state it is specially to be looked unto.

Ireland, p. 677.

But learning, and bringing up in liberall sciences, will not come of it selfe, but must be drawen on with straight lawes and ordinaunces: And therfore it were meete that such an acte were ordayned, that all the sonnes of lordes, gentellmen, and such others as are able to bring them up in learning, should be trayned up therin from theyr childhoode. And for that end everye parrish should be forced to keepe one pettye schoolmaster, adjoyning to the parish church, to be the more in viewe, which should bring up theyr children in the first rudimentes of letters: and that, in everye countrey or barronye, they should keepe an other able schoolmaster, which should instructe them in grammer, and in the principles of sciences, to whom they should be compelled to send theyr youth to be disciplined, wherby they will in shorte time growe up to that civill conversation, that both the children will loth theyr former rudenesse in which they were bredd, and also the parents will, even by the example of theyr yong children, perceave the fowleness of theyr owne brutish behaviour compared to theyrs: for learning hath that wonderfull power in it selfe, that it can soften and temper the most sterne and savage nature. *Ireland*, p. 678.

See also Immortality, Wisdom and Goodness.

POWER OF POETRY

Then who so will with virtuous deeds assay
To mount to heaven, on Pegasus must ride,
And with sweete poets verse be glorifide.

R. of T. 425–427.

'The brave courtier' withdraws his mind at times unto the 'Ladie Muses,' and with their wise discourse 'of dreadfull battle of renowmed knights' he kindles 'his ambitious sprights to like desire and praise of noble fame.'

Prosopopoia 761 ff.

And sooth, it ought your corage much inflame,
To heare so often, in that royall hous,
From whence to none inferior ye came,
Bards tell of many wemen valorous,
Which have full many feats adventurous
Performd, in paragone of proudest men. *F. Q.* 3. 3. 54.

By wondring at thy Cynthiaes praise,
Colin, thy selfe thou mak'st us more to wonder,
And her upraising, doest thy selfe upraise.
Colin 353–355.

Ne her with ydle words alone he wowed,
And verses vaine, (yet verses are not vaine).
Astro. 67–68.

Great wrong I doe, I can it not deny,
To that most sacred empresse, my dear dred,
Not finishing her Queene of Faëry,
That mote enlarge her living prayses, dead.
Amor. 33. 1–4.

But since ye deignd so goodly to relent
To me your thrall, in whom is little worth,
That little that I am shall all be spent
In setting your immortall prayses forth:
Whose lofty argument, uplifting me,
Shall lift you up unto an high degree. *Amor.* 82. 9–14.

Having, in the greener times of my youth, composed these former two hymnes in the praise of love and beautie, and finding that the same too much pleased those of like age and disposition, which, being too vehemently caried with that kind of affection, do rather sucke out poyson to their strong passion, then hony to their honest delight, I was moved by the one of you two most excellent Ladies, to call in the same. But being unable so to doe, by reason that many copies thereof were formerly scattered abroad, I resolved at least to

amend, and by way of retractation to reforme them, making in stead of those two hymnes of earthly or naturall love and beautie, two others of heavenly and celestiall.

Letter preceding the *Hymnes.*

Love, that long since hast to thy mighty powre
Perforce subdude my poore captived hart,
And raging now therein with restlesse stowre,
Doest tyrannize in everie weaker part,
Faine would I seeke to ease my bitter smart
By any service I might do to thee,
Or ought that else might to thee pleasing bee.

And now t' asswage the force of this new flame,
And make thee more propitious in my need,
I meane to sing the praises of thy name.

1 *Hymne* 1–10.

Spenser tells us that he wrote the *Hymne in Honour of Beautie* in order that it,

The ravisht harts of gazefull men might reare
To admiration of that heavenly light,
From whence proceeds such soule enchaunting might.

2 *Hymne* 11–13.

Many lewd layes (ah, woe is me the more!)
In praise of that mad fit which fools call love,
I have in th' heat of youth made heretofore,
That in light wits did loose affection move.
But all those follies now I do reprove,
And turned have the tenor of my string,
The heavenly praises of true love to sing.

3 *Hymne* 7–13.

Spenser says of Venice:

Yet not so fayre her buildings to behold
As Lewkenors stile that hath her beautie told.

Commendatory Sonnet 4. 13–14.

See also Immortality of Verse.

SPENSER'S READING

The following list contains the authors and works mentioned in Spenser's writings:[1]

Æneas Silvius
Æsop
Ariosto
Aristotle
Bede
Berosus
Bohemus
Buchanan
Caesar
Camden
Chaucer (often mentioned in *S. C.* under the title of 'Tityrus'; but by his own name in *F. Q.* 4. 2. 32).
Diodorus Siculus
Herodianus
Herodotus
Homer
Lucian
Luddus
Machiavelli
Olaus Magnus
Plato
Pliny
Plutarch
Pompeius [Pomponius] Mela
Ptolomie
Solinus
Strabo
Stanihurst
Tacitus
Tasso
Vincentius
Virgil
Xenophon
The Bible
Greek Commentaries upon Callimachus
The Contemporary Elizabethan Poets (Colin)
'Many Historyes and chronicles'
'Many auncient and authentycal writers.'

RESPECT FOR ANTIQUITY

And ye, brave Lord, whose goodly personage
And noble deeds, each other garnishing,
Make you ensample to the present age
Of th' old heroes, whose famous ofspring
The antique poets wont so much to sing,
In this same pageaunt have a worthy place.

6. *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.* 1–6.

[1] For a full account of Spenser's acquaintance with biblical and classical literature, the reader is referred to *Spenser's Belesenheit* (Leipzig 1908) by Wilhelm Riedner.

Therefore a god him sage antiquity
Did wiseley make, and good Agdistes call.
F. Q. 2. 12. 48.

Which who so list looke backe to former ages,
And call to count the things that then were donne,
Shall find, that all the workes of those wise sages,
And brave exploits which great heroes wonne,
In love were either ended or begunne:
Witnesse the father of philosophie,
Which to his Critias, shaded oft from sunne,
Of love full manie lessons did apply,
The which these Stoicke censours cannot well deny.
F. Q. 4, *Prologue* 3.

So oft as I with state of present time
The image of the antique world compare,
When as mans age was in his freshest prime,
And the first blossome of faire vertue bare,
Such oddes I finde twixt those, and these which are,
As that, through long continuaunce of his course
Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square
From the first point of his appointed sourse,
And being once amisse, growes daily wourse and wourse.

Let none then blame me, if in discipline
Of vertue and of civill uses lore,
I doe not forme them to the common line
Of present dayes, which are corrupted sore,
But to the antique use which was of yore.
F. Q. 5, *Prologue* 1, 3.

SATIRE

'Ah! Colin,' then said Hobbinol, 'the blame
Which thou imputest is too generall,
As if not any gentle wit of name,
Nor honest mynd might there be found at all.
* * * * * * * * * * * *

'Therefore unjustly thou doest wyte them all,
For that which thou mislikedst in a few.'
'Blame is,' quoth he, 'more blamelesse generall,
Then that which private errours doth pursew:
For well I wot, that there amongst them bee
Full many persons of right worthie parts,
Both for report of spotlesse honestie,
And for profession of all learned arts,
Whose praise hereby no whit impaired is,
Though blame do light on those that faultie bee.'
Colin 731–734, 747–756.

SCULPTURE

But it in shape and beautie did excell
All other idoles which the heathen adore,
Farre passing that which by surpassing skill
Phidias did make in Paphos isle of yore,
With which that wretched Greeke, that life forlore,
Did fall in love: yet this much fairer shined.
F. Q. 4. 10. 40.

SKILL

Passages illustrating the use of the word.

And hath he skill to make so excellent,
Yet hath so little skill to brydle love?
S. C., April 20–22.

Hob, But when they [the Muses] came where thou thy skill didst showe,
They drewe abacke, as halfe with shame confound,
Shepheard to see, them in theyr art outgoe.

Col. Of Muses, Hobbinol, I conne no skill.
S. C., June 62–65.

The sectaries of my celestiall skill. *Muses* 73.

But he that is of reasons skill bereft,
And wants the staffe of wisedom him to stay,
Is like a ship in midst of tempest left. *Muses* 138–140.

Love wont to be schoolmaster of my skill,
And the devicefull matter of my song. *Muses* 385–386.

But shame and sorrow and accursed case
Have they that scorne the schoole of arts divine,
And banish me, which do professe the skill
To make men heavenly wise through humbled will,
Muses 519–522.

For the sweet numbers, and melodious measures,
* * * * * * * * * * * * *
Now being let to runne at libertie
By those which have no skill to rule them right,
Have now quite lost their naturall delight.
Muses 547, 550–552.

Be you the souldier, for you likest are
For manly semblance, and small skill in warre.
Prosopopoia 199–200.

All painters skill, he did about him dight.
Muiopotmos 91.

Him so I sought, and so at last I fownd,
Where him that witch had thralled to her will,
In chaines of lust and lewde desyres ybownd,
And so transformed from his former skill,
That me he knew not, nether his owne ill. *F. Q.* 2. 1. 54.

Sweet skill in wonted melody. *F. Q.* 2. 12. 31.

And Howell Dha shall goodly well indew
The salvage minds with skill of just and trew.
F. Q. 3. 3. 45.

And, for his more assuraunce she inquir'd
One day of Proteus by his mighty spell
(For Proteus was with prophecy inspir'd)
Her deare sonnes destiny to her to tell,
And the sad end of her sweet Marinell.
Who, through foresight of his eternall skill,
Bad her from womankind to keepe him well,
F. Q. 3. 4. 25.

There yet, some say, in secret he [Adonis] does ly,
Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery,
By her hid from the world, and from the skill
Of Stygian gods, which doe her love envy. *F. Q.* 3. 6. 46.

Therein a cancred crabbed carle does dwell,
That has no skill of court nor courtesie. *F. Q.* 3. 9. 3.

O, wondrous skill and sweet wit of the man,
That her in daffadillies sleeping made. *F. Q.* 3. 11. 32.

But yet his sisters skill unto him lent
Most confidence and hope of happie speed,
Conceived by a ring which she him sent,
That, mongst the manie vertues which we reed,
Had power to staunch al wounds that mortally did bleed.
F. Q. 4. 2. 39.

Their mother was a Fay, and had the skill
Of secret things. *F. Q.* 4. 2. 44.

The goodly workes, and stones of rich assay,
Cast into sundry shapes by wondrous skill.
F. Q. 4. 10. 15.

But it in shape and beautie did excell
All other idoles which the heathen adore,
Farre passing that which by surpassing skill
Phidias did make in Paphos isle of yore. *F. Q.* 4. 10. 40.

With great amazement they were stupefide;
* * * * * * * * * * * * *
So feeble skill of perfect things the vulgar has.
F. Q. 5. 3. 17.

Yet Calidore did not despise him quight,
But usde him friendly for further intent,
That by his fellowship he colour might
Both his estate and love from skill of any wight.
F. Q. 6. 10. 37.

The glorious pourtraict of that angels face,
Made to amaze weake mens confused skil. *Amor.* 17. 1–2.

When I behold that beauties wonderment
And rare perfection of each goodly part,
Of Natures skill the onely complement,
I honor and admire the Makers art. *Amor.* 24. 1–4.

Let her accept me as her faithfull thrall,
That her great triumph, which my skill exceeds,
I may in trump of fame blaze over all. *Amor.* 29. 10–12.

But my rude musick, which was wont to please
Some dainty eares, cannot, with any skill,
The dreadful tempest of her wrath appease.
Amor. 38. 5–7.

Is it her nature or is it her will,
To be so cruell to an humbled foe?
If nature, then she may it mend with skill,
If will, then she at will may will forgoe. *Amor.* 41. 1–4.

But this continuall cruell civill warre,
The which my selfe against my selfe doe make,
Whilest my weak powres of passions warreid arre,
So skill can stint, nor reason can aslake. *Amor.* 44. 5–8.

Most happy letters! fram'd by skilfull trade,
With which that happy name was first desynd,
The which three times thrise happy hath me made.
Amor. 74. 1–3.

But they, that skill not of so heavenly matter,
All that they know not, envy or admyre. *Amor.* 84. 5–6.

Thereof he fashions in his higher skill
An heavenly beautie to his fancies will.
2 *Hymne* 221–222.

STYLE (Simplicity or Meanness)

Most faire and vertuous Ladie: having often sought opportunitie by some good meanes to make knowen to your Ladiship the humble affection and faithfull duetie which I have alwaies professed, and am bound to beare, to that house from whence yee spring, I have at length found occasion to remember the same, by making a simple present to you of these my idle labours; which having long sithens composed in the raw conceipt of my youth, I lately amongst other papers lighted upon, and was by others, which liked the same, mooved to set them foorth. Simple is the device, and the composition meane, yet carrieth some delight, even the rather because of the simplicitie and meannesse thus personated.
Letter preceding *Prosopopoia.*

No Muses aide me needes hereto to call;
Base is the style, and matter meane withall.
Prosopopoia 43–44.

Sir, that you may see that I am not alwaies ydle as ye thinke, though not greatly well occupied, nor altogither undutifull, though not precisely officious, I make you present of this simple pastorall, unworthie of your higher conceipt for the meanesse of the stile, but agreeing with the truth in circumstance and matter. Letter preceding *Colin.*

SUBJECT-MATTER OF POETRY

Therefore I [Clio] mourne with deep harts sorrowing,
Because I nothing noble have to sing. *Muses* 107–108.

His minde unto the Muses he withdrawes;
Sweete Ladie Muses, ladies of delight,
Delights of life, and ornaments of light:
With whom he close confers, with wise discourse,
Of Natures workes, of heavens continuall course,
Of forreine lands, of people different,
Of kingdomes change, of divers government,
Of dreadfull battailes of renowmed knights;
With which he kindleth his ambitious sprights
To like desire and praise of noble fame.
Prosopopoia 760–769.

Who ever gave more honourable prize
To the sweet Muse then did the martiall crew,
That their brave deeds she might immortalize
In her shril tromp, and sound their praises dew?
14 *Ded. Sonnet, F. Q.* 1–4.

Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.
F. Q. 1, *Prologue* 1.

TRAGEDY

My part it is and my professed skill
The stage with tragick buskin to adorne,
And fill the scene with plaint and outcries shrill
Of wretched persons, to misfortune borne:
But none more tragick matter I can finde
Than this, of men deprived of sense and minde.

For all mans life me seemes a tragedy,
Full of sad sights and sore catastrophees,
First comming to the world with weeping eye,

Where all his dayes, like dolorous trophees,
Are heapt with spoyles of fortune and of feare,
And he at last laid forth on balefull beare.

So all with rufull spectacles is fild,
Fit for Megera or Persephone;
But, I that in true tragedies am skild,
The flowre of wit, finde nought to busie me:
Therefore I mourne, and pitifully mone,
Because that mourning matter I have none.
Muses 151–168.

Who now shall give unto my heavie eyes
A well of teares, that all may overflow?
Or where shall I finde lamentable cryes,
And mournfull tunes enough my griefe to show?
Helpe, O thou Tragick Muse, me to devise
Notes sad enough t' expresse this bitter throw:
For loe! the drerie stownd is now arrived,
That of all happines hath us deprived.
Muiopotmos 409–417.

And forth yssewd, as on the readie flore
Of some theatre, a grave personage,
That in his hand a braunch of laurell bore,
With comely haveour and count'nance sage,
Yclad in costly garments, fit for tragicke stage.
F. Q. 3. 12. 3.

But oh! fond man! that in worlds ficklenesse
Reposedst hope, or weenedst her thy frend
That glories most in mortall miseries,
And daylie doth her changefull counsels bend,
To make new matter fit for tragedies! *Daph.* 149–153.

'But nowe when all thinges are brought to this pass, and all filled with this rufull spectacle of soe many wretched carcasses starving, goodly countreys wasted, so huge a

desolation and confusion, as even I that doe but heare it from you, and doe picture it in my mynde, doe greatlye pittye and commiserate it, yf it shall happen, that the state of this miserye and lamentable image of thinges shal be told, and feelingly presented to her Sacred Majestie, being by nature full of mercye and clemencye, whoe is most inclinable to such pityfull complaynts, and will not endure to heare such tragedyes made of her people and poore subjectes as some about her may insinuate; then she perhaps, for verye compassion of such calamityes, will not onely stopp the streame of such violence, and returne to her woonted mildenesse, but also conne them litle thankes which have bene the authors and counsellours of such bloodie platformes. *Ireland*, p. 654.

TRAINING OF THE POET

Abandon then the base and viler clowne:
Lyft up thy selfe out of the lowly dust,
And sing of bloody Mars, of wars, of giusts:
Turne thee to those that weld the awful crowne,
To doubted knights, whose woundlesse armour rusts
And helms unbruzed wexen dayly browne.

There may thy Muse display her fluttryng wing,
And stretch her selfe at large from east to west:
Whither thou list in fayre Elisa rest,
Or if thee please in bigger notes to sing,
Advaunce the worthy whome shee loveth best,
That first the white beare to the stake did bring.

And when the stubborne stroke of stronger stounds
Has somewhat slackt the tenor of thy string,
Of love and lustihead then mayst thou sing,
And carrol lowde, and leade the myllers rownde,
All were Elisa one of thilke same ring.
So moght our Cuddies name to heaven sownde.

S. C. October, 37–54.

The nightingale is sovereigne of song,
Before him sits the titmose silent bee:
And I, unfitte to thrust in skilfull thronge,
Should Colin make judge of my fooleree
Nay, better learne of hem that learned bee,
And han be watered at the Muses well:
The kindlye dewe drops from the higher tree,
And wets the little plants that lowly dwell.
S. C., November 25–32.

'And for I was in thilke same looser yeares,
(Whether the Muse so wrought me from my birth,
Or I to much beleeved my shepherd peres,)
Somedele ybent to song and musicks mirth,
A good olde shephearde, Wrenock was his name,
Made me by arte more cunning in the same.
S. C., December 37–42.

Yet doth his trembling Muse but lovely flie,
As daring not too rashly mount on hight,
And doth her tender plumes as yet but trie
In loves soft laies and looser thoughts delight.
Then rouze thy feathers quickly, Daniell,
And to what course thou please thy selfe advance:
But most, me seemes, thy accent will excell
In tragick plaints and passionate mischance.
Colin 420–427.

Beginning then below, with th' easie vew
Of this base world, subject to fleshly eye,
From thence to mount aloft by order dew
To contemplation of th' immortall sky,
Of the soare faulcon so I learne to fly,
That flags awhile her fluttering wings beneath,
Till she her selfe for stronger flight can breath.
4 Hymne 22–28.

Spenser seeks advice and criticism from Harvey: 'I beseeche you without the leaste selfe love of your own purpose, councell

me for the beste: and the rather doe it faithfullye and carefully, for that, in all things, I attribute so muche to your judgement, that I am evermore content to adnihilate mine owne determinations in respecte thereof.'

Letter to Harvey, October, 1579.

Loe! here I let you see my olde use of toying in rymes, turned into your artificial straightnesse of verse by this *tetrasticon*. I beseech you tell me your fancie, without partialitie. . . . . I wil in hande forthwith with my *Faery Queene*, whyche I praye you hartily send me with al expedition, and your frendly letters, and long expected judgement withal, whyche let not be shorte, but in all pointes suche as you ordinarilye use and I extraordinarily desire. *Letter to Harvey*, April, 1580.

The writer must be 'a man of sound judgment and plentiful reading.' *Ireland*, p. 625.

UNITY

Spenser is conscious that the unity and sequence of the *Faerie Queene* may be called in question:

Like as a ship, that through the ocean wyde
Directs her course unto one certaine cost,
Is met of many a counter winde and tyde,
With which her winged speed is let and crost,
And she her selfe in stormie surges tost;
Yet making many a borde, and many a bay,
Still winneth way, ne hath her compasse lost:
Right so it fares with me in this long way,
Whose course is often stayd, yet never is astray.

For all that hetherto hath long delayd
This gentle knight from sewing his first quest,
Though out of course, yet hath not bene mis-sayd,
To shew the courtesie by him profest
Even unto the lowest and the least.
But now I come into my course againe. *F. Q.* 6. 12. 1–2.

WISDOM AND VIRTUE

It most behoves the honorable race
Of mightie peeres true wisedome to sustaine,
And with their noble countenaunce to grace
The learned forheads, without gifts or gaine:
Or rather learnd themselves behoves to bee;
That is the girlond of nobilitie.

But ah! all otherwise they doo esteeme
Of th' heavenly gift of wisedomes influence,
And to be learned it a base thing deeme;
Base minded they that want intelligence:
For God himselfe for wisedome most is praised,
And men to God thereby are nighest raised.

Muses 78–89

Most miserable creature under sky
Man without understanding doth appeare;
For all this worlds affliction he thereby
And Fortunes freakes is wisely taught to beare:
Of wretched life the onely joy shee is,
And th' only comfort in calamities.

She armes the brest with constant patience
Against the bitter throwes of dolours darts,
She solaceth with rules of sapience
The gentle minds, in midst of wordlie smarts.

Muses 127–136.

So wee, that earst in joyance did abound,
And in the bosome of all blis did sit,
Like virgin queenes with laurell garlands cround,
For vertues meed and ornament of wit,
Sith Ignorance our kingdome did confound,
Bee now become most wretched wightes on ground.

Muses 307–312.

What difference twixt man and beast is left,
When th' heavenlie light of knowledge is put out,
And th' ornaments of wisdome are bereft?
Then wandreth he in error and in doubt,
Unweeting of the danger hee is in,
Through fleshes frailtie and deceipt of sin.
In this wide world in which they wretches stray,
It is the onlie comfort which they have,
It is their light, their loadstarre and their day:
But hell and darknesse and the grislie grave
Is ignorance, the enemie of grace,
That mindes of men borne heavenlie doth debace.
Muses 487–498.

See also Ignorance, Power of Knowledge.

WORKMANSHIP

So long as Guyon with her commoned,
Unto the ground she cast her modest eye,
And ever and anone with rosy red
The bashful blood her snowy cheekes did dye,
That her became as polisht yvory,
Which cunning craftesmans hand hath overlayd
With fayre vermilion or pure castory. *F. Q.* 2. 9. 41.

A gorgeous girdle, curiously embost
With pearle and precious stone, worth many a marke;
Yet did the workmanship farre passe the cost.
F. Q. 4. 4. 15.

As guilefull goldsmith that, by secret skill,
With golden foyle doth finely over spred
Some baser metall, which commend he will
Unto the vulgar for good gold insted,

He much more goodly glosse thereon doth shed,
To hide his falsehood, then if it were trew:
So hard this idole was to be ared,

That Florimell her selfe in all mens vew
She seem'd to passe: so forged things do fairest shew.
F. Q. 4. 5. 15.

Unto that purposd place I did me draw,
Where as my love was lodged day and night:
The temple of great Venus, that is hight
The Queene of Beautie, and of Love the mother,
There worshipped of every living wight;
Whose goodly workmanship farre past all other
That ever were on earth, all were they set together.
F. Q. 4. 10. 29.

They, passing by, were guyded by degree
Unto the presence of that gratious queene:
Who sate on high, that she might all men see,
And might of all men royally be seene,
Upon a throne of gold full bright and sheene,
Adorned all with Gemmes of endlesse price,
As either might for wealth have gotten bene,
Or could be fram'd by workmans rare device;
And all embost with lyons and with flourdelice.
F. Q. 5. 9. 27.

See also Architecture, Art, Skill.

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